BING

Spring
2018

No. 178

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

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Club: www.club-crosby.org
BING magazine: www.bingmagazine.co.uk
Bing Crosby Enterprises: www.BingCrosby.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326
Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Club_Crosby

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(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins

(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

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EDITORIAL

In every New Year, we look for anniversaries and for example it's 50 years since Bing recorded his "Hey Jude" album so it's entirely appropriate that Anton reviews this in depth later in this issue. On a more modest level, it's 25 years since I became Editor of this magazine. Ken Crossland took over as Editor from the late Reg Bristo in 1989 with me acting as his Assistant and I assumed sole responsibility with issue No. 103 in 1993. It's been a very satisfying journey for me and I look back with pleasure at the last 75 editions.

The announcement we had all been awaiting for some years came on January 28 – Gary Giddins' book *Swinging on a Star – The War Years 1940-1946* will be available in November this year! I emailed all members whose addresses I had and naturally there was an overwhelmingly enthusiastic response. We have further information on a subsequent page.

We send our congratulations to Nathaniel Crosby on his appointment as Captain of the USA 2019 Walker Cup team but naturally those of us in the UK are hoping that Great Britain and Ireland can regain the trophy.

As usual, Bing enjoyed his customary seasonal popularity around Christmas-time and he even appeared in a Billboard chart. It does seem that the Bing and Bowie duet is being heard more often than "White Christmas" nowadays and this is a real pity because "Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy" hardly represents Bing's best work.

I am sure that all of you will be delighted with the new CDs from Bing Crosby Enterprises and Richard Baker provides all the details in *Keeping Track*. Ken Crossland has written an excellent explanation of the source of "crooning" in his *Crosbyana* article and Anton reviews Will Friedwald's superb new book in *Books 'n' Bing*. Martin McQuade tells us about a very important banjo and Gord Atkinson explains how Bing helped shape his life. Sadly our obituaries section shows no sign of reducing in size but I suppose that's inevitable with the passing of time.

After so many years it's a real pleasure to have so much material available for our magazine. I thank all our contributors for making my job so easy. You all seem to like the use of colour throughout the magazine and we'll try to maintain this whilst funds permit.

Malcolm Macfarlane macwilmslo@aol.com

First things first—my congratulations to my fellow British Co-Editor on 25 amazing years in that capacity. I know I echo the feelings of all ICC members, past and present, in showing the most heartfelt gratitude to Malcolm for his dedication to the club and the magazine and for the wonderful job he has been doing for a quarter of a century. I am honored to collaborate with him and hope to do so for many years to come.

As Malcolm points out, every holiday season it is interesting to see how popular Bing's twilight duet with David Bowie has become. Though I agree it is hardly his best Christmas recording, this charming oddity (not of the space kind, mind you) has come to represent a sort of gateway into the future for Bing's artistic legacy, a transgenerational meeting that hopefully will help introduce future generations to Crosby's music. And in any case, Bing and Bowie at Christmas are better than no Bing at all!

The new CD releases from BCE and the impending publication of the second part of Gary Giddins's biography of Bing are reasons for all Crosby fans to rejoice. In the latter case, we had been waiting for this new installment for many years, and I am sure we are all counting down the days until we can finally pre-order our copy. Will Friedwald's new book on classic pop albums, which I review later in the magazine, is yet another most welcome addition to the shelves of any serious Crosby fan, since it includes two chapters devoted to in-depth explorations of two great LPs by Bing.

And finally, it was time for me to tackle *Hey Jude / Hey Bing*, an album that turns 50 this year. Albeit not one of my favorite outings by Crosby, it is not without its positive sides, many of which I have discovered by dusting it off and listening to it intently after decades of neglect. Hopefully one day it will be treated to a proper CD reissue!

Anton Garcia-Fernandez antongarciafdez@gmail.com

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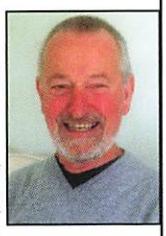
SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT



I would like to begin my spring report by commending Malcolm, Wig, David Currington, Perry Huntoon, Scott Payne and our team of contributors for their continuing unstinting work on behalf of the ICC. Their voluntary efforts help ensure that members receive their three copies of BING in a timely way and it is quite amazing that we find new material appearing with each issue, 40 years after Bing's passing and 82 years since the club was founded. Malcolm, Wig, David, Perry, Scott and our regular contributors, please take a bow.

Praise and commendation is also due to Robert Bader and BCE for the production and issue of their excellent new CDs which offer superb quality, rarity of content and very attractive and informative packaging. These CDs have a noteworthy appeal and especially for me after 60 years of collecting Bing's recordings, it is just wondrous that new material is being issued.

In the last issue, Malcolm appealed to you all to pay your dues / subscriptions promptly and I was very disappointed to learn that Wig had to send out 75 chaser letters on February 15. I know that there will be genuine reasons in some cases but it is costly and time consuming for your club volunteers to have to undertake this task. It does not give us much encouragement if members do not care enough to support us by paying their subs promptly.

Members may wish to reflect on the annual accounts and note that our net income from subscriptions has declined, due to falling numbers, and that we only survive financially because of the magnanimity of our benefactors. Inevitably, it will become necessary to consider raising subscriptions once again or alternatively moving to two magazines per year. I will keep the accounts under review as the year progresses and report to members in December.

Jason Liddiard's Christmas gathering was a joyful affair with the highlight being the showing of the colour version of *Holiday Inn* on a large projector screen. We also heard excerpts from "High Tor" and the new 60th anniversary edition of "New Tricks". It is heartening to be in the company of others who enjoy Bing's wonderful musical legacy and I would like to thank Jason and Sharon for a memorable day.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members with a wish that they will derive much interest and enjoyment from their membership of the club.

UNITED STATES

Jonas Hartzler (Bloomington, Illinois)

UNITED KINGDOM

David Pettifor (Catford, London)

THE NETHERLANDS

Ineke Hommes (AB Vooburg)

DONATIONS

As I say almost every time, the ICC continues to be very fortunate indeed in having such generous benefactors who consistently support the club with their financial gifts. We are extremely pleased to acknowledge the very welcome additional sum of £750 contributed by the members listed below. We are indebted to them.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Gerard Hanlon, Paul Hennessey, Chris Hitchcock, Derek Perkins

AUSTRIA

Thomas Hirschmann

BELGIUM
Michael Haefner
BRAZIL
Renato Failace
UNITED KINGDOM
Frank Startup, Nicholas Morrison, Alan Bostock, Geoff White, Roger Addey, Ken Heason, Ken Shaw, John R Byrd, Mike O'Donoghue, John Stiles, J W Woodcock, Trevor Grassby, Bert Bishop, Bob Halls, Tom Maher, Doreen Hubbard, Brenda Sellers, Geoff L Robinson, Mike Mansley, Matthew Sprott, Mr A J Perry, David Grossman, Margaret North, Ian Patience, Arthur Blood, Dennis Saville, Mark Spry, Charles Wilkinson, George Patmore, Frank Thompson, Gil McKee, Tom Wallace, Colin Stewart, Bert Hamblet and Des Cusack.
Donations from our US and Canadian members will be acknowledged in the summer issue.

DEATHS

We are very sorry to report the deaths of the following members:-
Alfred (Alf) Bunn (Leeds, West Yorkshire – aged 86),
Lew Grassby (Dartford, Kent aged 94),
Graham Brewer (Cheddar, Somerset aged 90),
Tom O'Donnell (Venice, Florida)

Alf Bunn and I were close friends for over 30 years and we enjoyed a Bing evening every week whenever we were not on holiday. We shared the same taste in music and our collections grew in tandem as the years went by. We also shared an electrical background and Alf was a skilled carpenter producing some fine furniture which many admired. Sadly, Alf succumbed to an infection on New Year's Day and I lost a very dear friend whom I miss greatly.

Trevor Grassby informed us of Lew's passing and that Lew served in the Army in the Royal Electrical/Mechanical Engineers in Iraq. He was a keen gardener and lifelong fan of Arsenal Football Club. Lewis had 3 siblings, 6 grandchildren and ten Great Grandchildren.

Our sincere condolences are extended to the family and friends of Alf, Lew, Graham and Tom.

BING CROSBY ON CD
This is my usual reminder that the following single CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £7.50, Europe £9.50 and the rest of the world £10.50. The price for the double CD is £9.50 UK, £11.50 Ireland & Europe, £15 for rest of the world.

Members in the US and Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins and in Australia/New Zealand from David Currington.
BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vols. 4, 8, 9 and 10
BING CROSBY and the Kraft Music Hall – Rare Original Survivors
THE ROAD TO HONG KONG – SAY ONE FOR ME
BING CROSBY – GOOD AND RARE VOL 3.
JOIN BING & SING ALONG (2 CD SET)

Until the summer, my warmest greetings to all members.

Michael Crampton mdcrampton@gmail.com

Swinging on a Star – The War Years 1940-1946

The most welcome press release which appeared on January 28 read as follows.

COMING IN NOVEMBER 2018

Gary Giddins presents the second volume of his

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31st DECEMBER 2017

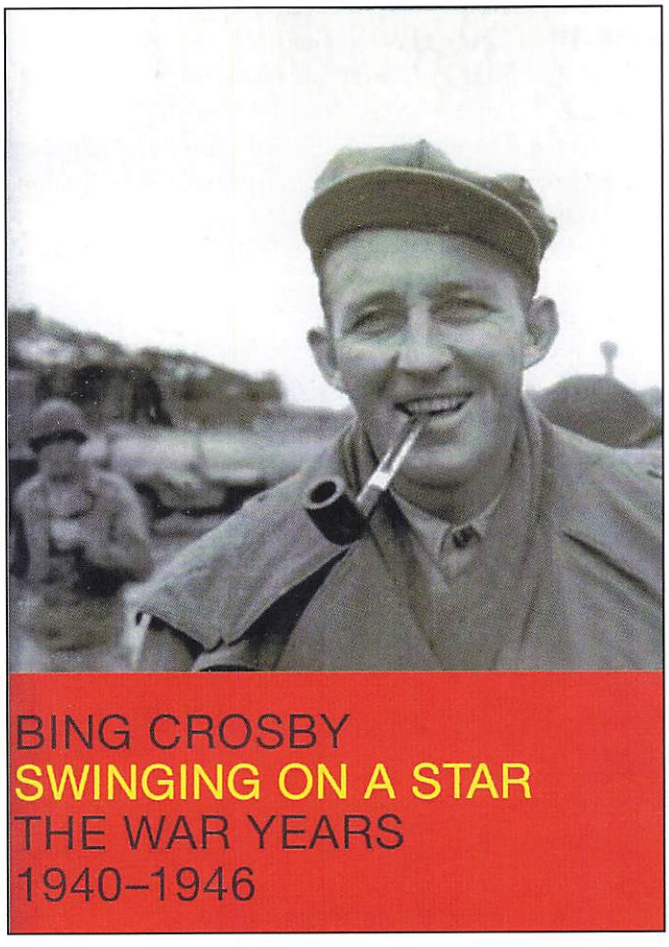
Income	£	Expenditure	£
Subscriptions	8320	Production of BING magazine	11384
Donations	3224	Secretarial costs	288
Sales – Books / back issues	43	CDs - costs	1052
Sales – CDs	389		
Australian subs in advance (2018)	286	Editorial costs	4
		Postage – books/back issues	30
		ICC web page	86
Bank balance 31/12/2016	11510	Bank balance 31/12/2017	10928
	23772		23772

Note:
1. The accounts are a simple unaudited Income and Expenditure summary. Amounts owing and stocks of books and CDs held are not shown. Funds held on a temporary basis by the various international representatives are not shown either.
2. The club is able to cover its anticipated expenditure in 2018.

Michael Crampton. Secretary/Treasurer

masterful multi-part biography

Bing Crosby dominated American popular culture in a way that few artists ever have. From the dizzy era of Prohibition through the dark days of the Second World War, he was a desperate nation's most beloved entertainer. But he was more than just a charismatic crooner: Bing Crosby redefined the very foundations of modem music, from the way it was recorded to the way it was orchestrated and performed.



In this much-anticipated follow-up to the universally acclaimed first volume, NBCC Winner and preeminent cultural critic Gary Giddins now focuses on Crosby's most memorable period, the war years and the origin story of White Christmas. Set against the backdrop of a Europe on the brink of collapse, this groundbreaking work traces Crosby's skyrocketing career as he fully inhabits a new era of American entertainment and culture. While he would go on to reshape both popular music and cinema more comprehensively than any other artist, Crosby's legacy would be forever intertwined with his impact on the home front, a unifying voice for a nation at war. Over a decade in the making and drawing on hundreds of interviews and unprecedented access to numerous archives, Giddins finally brings Bing Crosby, his work, and his world to vivid life — firmly reclaiming Crosby's central role in American cultural history.

"The best thing to happen to Bing Crosby since Bob Hope." (WSJ)

See also http://garygiddins.com/

(Editor: I can't wait!)

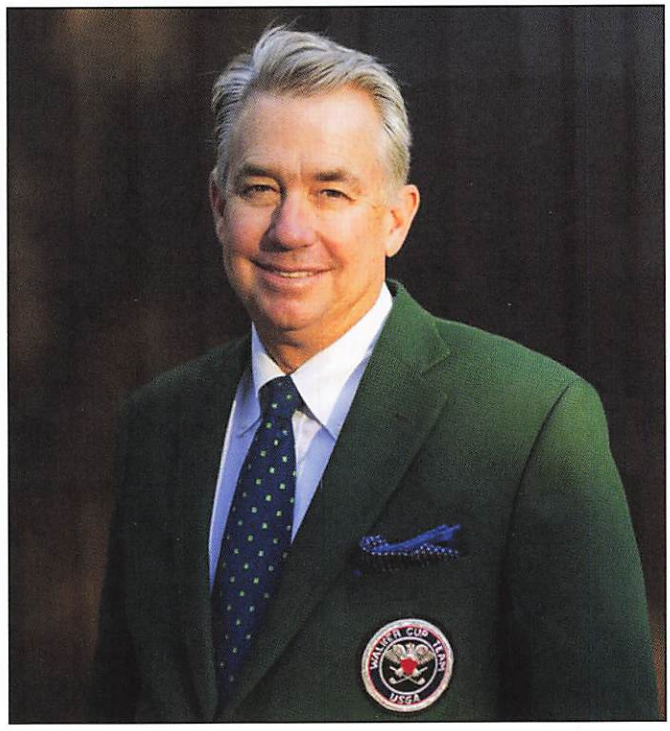
Nathaniel Crosby selected to captain U.S. team in 2019 Walker Cup at Royal Liverpool

We were delighted to see this announcement and we send our congratulations to Nathaniel for this honour.

Nathaniel was part of the U.S. team that won the Walker Cup at Royal Liverpool Golf Club in Hoylake, England, in 1983. In 2019 he will complete the circle, returning to Hoylake, this time as the captain of the U.S. Walker Cup team.

He was interviewed at the time of the announcement and said:

"I haven't had a great moment in 35 years, haven't won a tournament in 35 years," Crosby said. "So when Diana Murphy [the USGA president] called me, I was extremely surprised. For someone that has something to say about everything, I was taken aback. I had a serious loss of breath when she told me I would be the next Walker Cup captain."



Nathaniel photographed last December.

It seems that Nathaniel largely had reconciled with the idea that he likely would never be the Walker Cup captain based on the fact that the job generally goes to those who were career amateurs. Nathaniel intended his amateur career to launch him onto a successful professional career.

He played a few PGA Tour events and was a member of the European Tour for two years, but essentially retired from competitive golf to pursue a business career.

But when he turned up on the short list of candidates, his appeal to the USGA was that a preponderance of Walker Cup players these days similarly aspire to a professional career and as a result he can relate to them.

"To consider being an amateur golfer as a career made no sense to me when I was 17 years old," he said. "My pitch to the USGA was that I'm more in touch with guys trying to be successful golf pros who are 18, 19, 20, 21 years old."

Nathaniel has his own history in Great Britain. It began with the '83 Walker Cup at Hoylake, where he had a 1-1 record in the Americans' 13 1/2 to 10 1/2 victory. His teammates included three other future U.S. Walker Cup captains—Jay Sigel, Jim Holtgrieve and Bob Lewis Jr.

There, too, was his role in Bing's annual Christmas show, this one, "Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas," recorded in England in 1977.

A few weeks after recording was completed and Nathaniel had returned home, Bing died of a heart attack moments after finishing a round of golf in Spain.

Four years later, Nathaniel, 19 at the time, won the U.S. Amateur at the Olympic Club not far from the family home in Hillsborough, Calif., and next door to the San Francisco Golf Club where he remains a member.

Crosby, who regained his amateur status in 1994, has been a partner and executive in three golf equipment companies—Toney Penna Golf, the Jack Nicklaus Equipment Company and Orlimar Golf. Today, he is chairman of the AppleTree Golf Society.

"Nathaniel Crosby has proven experience as an amateur player at the highest levels in both individual and team competition, and this will lend itself well to providing leadership for the USA Walker Cup Team in 2019," Stuart Francis, USGA Championship Committee chairman, said in a statement. "His father earned the USGA's highest honor, the Bob Jones Award, and I know Nathaniel possesses similar traits, including sportsmanship, patriotism and a competitive spirit, that will assist him as captain."

Incidentally, U.S. Walker Cup captains typically are retained for a second term. It would seem likely that Crosby, too, would be the U.S. captain again in 2021, given that the Walker Cup will be played at Seminole Golf Club in North Palm Beach, Fla., where he also is a member. Nathaniel, however, is not looking that far ahead.

"To be honest with you, I'm so grateful and so appreciative of the incredible gesture of being named the Walker Cup captain," he said.

Bing back in the charts

Lachlan McLean drew my attention to the very welcome news of Bing appearing at No. 42 in the *Billboard* Artist 100 chart on December 23. I wasn't really sure what this chart was and here is the definition.

> *The chart blends information culled from album sales, track sales, radio airplay, streaming and social media fan interaction to provide a weekly multi-dimensional ranking of an artist's popularity across all the main means of music consumption.*

The following week Bing reached the No. 38 spot and for the week ended January 3 he was at No. 37. This is very pleasing indeed and reflects Bing's continuing impact on the Christmas scene.

Open house and film festival celebrated Bing Crosby legacy

Bing Crosby Advocates (BCA), a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the legendary entertainer's legacy, hosted two of its biggest events in early December.

BCA held the fourth annual open house on Saturday at the Bing Crosby Museum (the Bing Crosby House), and its 12th annual film festival Dec. 9 at the Bing Crosby Theater.

The museum at 508 E. Sharp Ave., the legendary entertainer's childhood home, was especially decorated for the holidays.

More than 200 items were on display in the museum, including mementos from Crosby's life and career, such as his gold and platinum records, the Academy Award he won for the film *Going My Way*, pipes, trophies and photographs.

BCA members served refreshments and almost all of the 275 cookies and hot cider were consumed by the 200 people who attended. Admission was free to the public, with designated parking directly behind the house. The highlight was having Bing's nephew Howard Crosby meet the visitors.

BCA's film festival celebrates Crosby's prolific Hollywood career. Crosby got his start performing skits in between silent films at the downtown theater, then known as the Clemmer.

Crosby's nephew, Howard Crosby, performed his uncle's songs, and local jazz, blues and swing band Hot Club of Spokane played favorites from the Crosby era.

Crosby's 1954 film *White Christmas* opened and closed the event. His 1942 film *Holiday Inn* was shown in the afternoon.

Of special note this year was the first-time showing of Crosby's 1950 film *Riding High*, directed by *It's a Wonderful Life* director Frank Capra, father-in-law of BCA board member Carol Capra.

Bing Crosby House

A very good 6-minute video about the Crosby House has been created by Spokane's public TV station KSPS and is now available online at:

http://video.ksps.org/video/3006966043/

This is great publicity for the Crosby House. It will run intermittently on KSPS as well as being available online.

Robert Bader Lecture

On January 12, Robert Bader, Vice President of Bing Crosby Enterprises, HLC Properties, Ltd. and the curator of the Bing Crosby Archive, presented a talk on Bing in the Community Room of the Rancho Mirage Public Library.

The publicity stated "Our fascination with Bing Crosby and other celebrities who lived and played in the desert never ends. An architect of 20th century entertainment, Crosby was a pioneer in the world of movies, radio, and television as well as a proponent of the wonders of technology. He owned homes and property in Rancho Mirage, Palm Springs and Palm Desert. In his later years, Crosby spent time on Coachella Valley golf courses, playing with Phil Harris, Bob Hope and Leonard Firestone. Robert S. Bader will supplement his presentation with film and slides."

Robert is also the author of *Four of the Three Musketeers: The Marx Brothers on Stage*.

'Rosary Priest' on path to possible sainthood

On December 18, Pope Francis approved the Decree of Heroic Virtue on the late Father Patrick Peyton (1909-1992), the first step toward possible canonization.

Peyton, an Irish-born priest who graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1937, for decades staged large prayer rallies and relied on mass communications tools to spread the word of faith. He dedicated his life and ministry to the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God.

He was known for using the phrases: "The family that prays together stays together" and "A world at prayer is a world at peace."

Over the course of his long career, Peyton founded the Family Rosary Crusade and came to be known as the "Rosary Priest."

Peyton was ordained in 1941 and was assigned as a chaplain in Albany, N.Y., where he began the Family Rosary Crusade, asking volunteers to assist him writing letters to bishops asking for help to organize a Rosary campaign. He also led radio broadcasts of the Rosary.

He traveled the world, leading large Rosary rallies in Canada, Brazil, Africa and across the United States. He recruited Hollywood stars such as Bing, Perry Como and Ann Blyth to help get his message out through radio, film, TV and books. By the time of his death, he had helped produce more than 600 TV and radio shows.

Father Peyton visits Bing.

Bing first became involved with the Father when he appeared on *The Chapel of the Air* hour on the Mutual Network on May 13, 1945 talking about finding time for prayer. This was the first of Father Peyton's Rosary broadcasts and it achieved nationwide coverage as it was a national day of thanksgiving following the end of hostilities in Europe.

> Crosby said that the Family Rosary was recited at his home every day, that he wanted his four boys to love their country, God and their home, that he wanted to believe in the efficacy and practice of prayer both at home and in church. Through daily family prayer, continued Crosby, all children and all adults will come closer to God. Crosby had a simple but perfectly phrased script which he read superbly.
> (*Variety*, May 16, 1945)

Bing gave consistent support to Peyton for many years thereafter.

At the time of his death, Peyton had preached to more people in person — an estimated 28 million — than any other Catholic, according to the Congregation of Holy Cross.

Should Bing Crosby get his Way in downtown?

The Spokesman-Review of December 25 considered whether Bing should have a street named after him in Spokane.

Mention the name Bing Crosby, and snowflakes fall. Sugarplum fairies dance. Sleigh bells ring.

But following a new effort by some local Bing enthusiasts, his name may remind you of more than the holidays. By renaming a portion of Sprague Avenue after

Crosby, the Advocates for Bing Crosby think the famous 20th-century crooner will make people think of Spokane's growing theater and entertainment district.

"We've got this tremendous name in national history," said Bill Stimson, president of the group and a journalism professor at Eastern Washington University. "Anybody in the country would crave to have that name put on their theater district."

The group is pushing an effort to rename Sprague Avenue – rife with live entertainment venues and locales that cater to the late crowd between Division and Browne's Addition – as "Bing Crosby Way."

It makes some sense, considering how Crosby spent his last years as a Gonzaga University student on the street, playing music and carousing with his friends. Stimson said the street is emblematic of Crosby's rise before his fateful road trip to Los Angeles, the city that shot him quickly to stardom.

Whitehead's Dancing Palace, which opened on Christmas Eve 1919, drew a young Crosby to its location on Sprague just east of Washington Street. There, he would avoid the dance floor and focus his attention on the band, especially the drummer, as they played songs for the waltz, foxtrot and the Charleston. The building still exists, but is now used as a parking garage.

The young Crosby and his friends.

Before and after the shows, Crosby would hang out at a tobacco and candy shop on Sprague and Wall Street run by a man named Benny Stubeck. During Prohibition in the basement of the building, where the Bank of America building currently stands, the college-aged Bing and his friends would occasionally get "drunker'n skunks on moonshine," Stubeck said according to a book about Crosby's early years, looking for girls, fights and a game of pool.

Crosby, though, also had ambition. At the time, the Symons Block, at the corner of Sprague and Howard Street, was home to one of the city's first radio stations, KFDC, which would later become KXLY. As a young, unknown musician, Crosby tried unsuccessfully to get on the air.

"Bing knew people who went on the radio there, but he couldn't get in," Stimson said. Not at first anyway. After achieving fame, Crosby would drive downtown from his home on Idaho's Hayden Lake and record his songs in the radio station's studios.

"He'd be carrying his black satchel with his favorite microphone in it," Stimson said. To this day, Crosby's recording credits contain a discordant listing of locations: New York, Los Angeles, London.

And Spokane.

Symons still stands, home to the Observatory bar and music venue.

Before he left town for the big time, Crosby cut his chops at the 800-seat Clemmer Theater, a movie house at the corner of Sprague and Lincoln. A manager there had decided to drum up interest by hiring live acts between films, and Crosby played there for six months. The theater also still stands, and is now known as the Bing Crosby Theater.

When Crosby finally packed his bags in 1925 and left for California with his performing partner, Al Rinker, in his 1916 Ford Model T, he departed on the Sunset Highway – which incidentally ran through downtown Spokane on, you guessed it, Sprague.

So next time you hear "White Christmas," "Silver Bells" or "I'll Be Home for Christmas" – all tunes originally recorded by Crosby, or forever linked to him – think of the time Spokane's favorite crooner spent on Sprague.

Or is it Bing Crosby Way?

Nicholas Deshais

Going My Way in Warrington

Jason Liddiard reports on his branch meeting of December 16th.

Our 'Going My Way' Christmas meeting broke the mould of our previous meetings: a new format, new meeting room and new video facilities.

Our festive opening track was 'Winter Wonderland' from Bing's 1962 album *I Wish You a Merry Christmas*, recorded 5th October, 1962 followed by an alternate take previously discussed by Richard Baker in BING #176. Our group theory was that this alternate take may have been a run through or rehearsal made prior to the take found on the original album. This might justify the lack of 'oomph' from either Bing or the band, and the absence of Bing's vocal embellishments in the final chorus.

A souvenir gift was presented to fellow ICC member Nicholas Morrison, making his debut at a 'Going My Way' branch meeting. More gifts in the form of CDs of Bing's 1955 CBS radio presentation *A Christmas Sing with Bing Around the World* were kindly provided by

Michael Crampton and gratefully received by all.

The festive theme continued with 'Just What I Wanted for Christmas', a Christmas gift from 1959, written by Cahn and Van Heusen and laden with Crosbyisms!

We had previously celebrated some famous centenary birthdays earlier in 2017, most notably those of Dame Vera Lynn and Ella Fitzgerald. Regular attendee Keith Richmond had earlier brought to my attention the 2017 centenaries of Dean Martin and Lena Horne and so, as a tribute to both artists we played a TV clip of a medley which included Bing, from *The Dean Martin Show* of October 1967.

The next audio selection was 'Snow' from the 1954 *White Christmas* album, a track featuring Bing with Peggy Lee, Danny Kaye and Trudy Stevens.

In our 'News and Reviews' section we covered the recent release by Stage Door Records of the soundtrack to the 1956 CBS TV production *High Tor*, with music by Arthur Schwartz and lyrics by Maxwell Anderson. We listened to a couple of Bing tracks, including 'Once Upon a Long Ago', a track with a particularly slow arrangement that Bing glides through to great effect – the highlight of the album, for this listener.

The 60th anniversary deluxe issue of *New Tricks* had landed on my doormat just two hours before our meeting kicked off. Malcolm Macfarlane suggested playing 'I'll Remember Today'. This previously unissued song, penned by Edith Piaf and originally broadcast on *The Ford Road Show* of 28th October, 1957 is up there with the best of Bing's ballads cut with Buddy Cole and his trio.

Other news items included the announcement made just that morning of the Blu-ray release of *King of Jazz*, scheduled for 27th March, 2018. Let's hope we have it in time for our spring Bing meeting!

Getting back into the Christmas swing of things, we played another of Bing's Christmas gems: 'I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day', a 1956 recording with Buddy Cole and the Ken Darby Singers.

Bing and Frank examine Frank's new Christmas album.

Our first video choice was the 1957 TV show *Happy Holidays with Bing and Frank*, the colour version unearthed by the Sinatra family back in 2001. We had some fun and debate identifying which tracks were performed live and which were lip-synced to pre-recorded tracks. One performance we all agreed was a live recording was Bing's marvellous jazzed-up rendition of 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer'. You certainly couldn't lip-sync to that one!

Bing's 1947 rendition of 'The Christmas Song' brought our first half to a close. Time for a refreshment break, with background music from *A Holiday Toast*, the 1977 LP release of *A Time to be Jolly*, with Jack Halloran and the Voices of Christmas accompanied by the Les Brown Orchestra on tracks laid down over two sessions in 1970 and 1971.

After some festive fayre and the usual Christmas group photo session, we took our seats for the colourised version of *Holiday Inn*, the wonderful 1942 vehicle for Bing and Fred Astaire.

We finished back where we started, with a track from 1962's *I Wish You a Merry Christmas* – 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas.'

The afternoon passed all too quickly, but it certainly felt like Christmas had started in the Liddiard household…

Jason Liddiard email:jkl@galleryjkl.com

The Perils of Texting and Driving

Set to Bing's song "I'll be Home for Christmas," a short film has been made about the dangers of texting while driving for U.K. road safety organizations the FIA Foundation and the AA Charitable Trust. It shows a father and daughter innocently texting back and forth while he's driving home for Christmas. She's eager to see him and get Christmas started. The devastating effects of texting and driving are highlighted when the film shows a haunting image of the father's fatal accident and culminates in a final, heart-breaking scene as the young girl grieves at her father's roadside memorial.

The Cambria Film Festival

The inaugural Cambria Film Festival took place in Cambria, San Luis Obispo County, California in February. At the Festival's closing champagne gala, Bing's film *Going Hollywood* was screened in the Hearst Castle Theater at the nearby Hearst Castle Visitor Center. Bing's co-star Marion Davies was of course involved in a long-term romantic relationship with William Randolph Hearst so it was an entirely appropriate location.

Keeping up with the Times: Bing Crosby's 1968 Album Hey Jude/Hey Bing

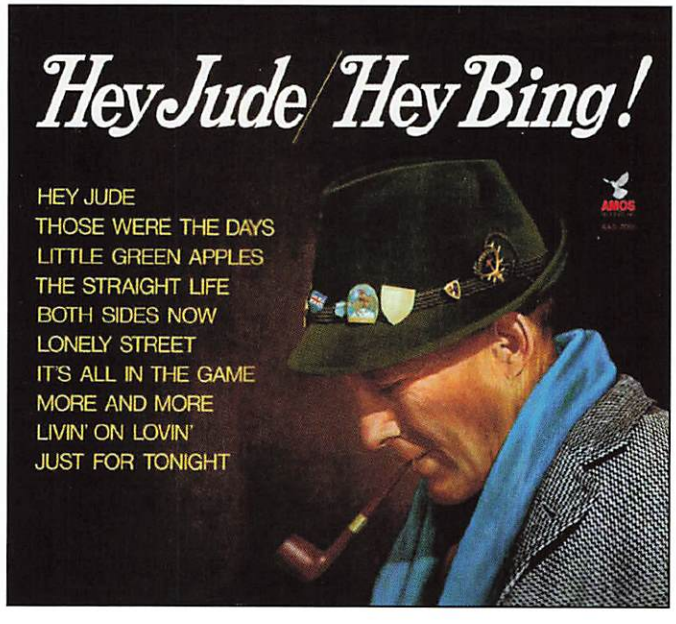
By the 1960s, after his long-standing tenure with Decca Records came to an end in 1955, Bing Crosby had been freelancing for a while, making a slew of excellent records for different labels, such as *Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings* (Verve, 1956), *Bing with a Beat* (RCA, 1957), and *Fancy Meeting You Here* (RCA, 1958), this last one in tandem with Rosemary Clooney and ace arranger Billy May. In 1960, he also recorded a landmark collaboration with his friend Louis Armstrong that had been a long time coming and that was released on MGM as *Bing & Satchmo*.

Though he was much more complimentary than other singers of his generation regarding the quality of the new trends in pop music, like rock and roll and the British Invasion, Crosby was at this time a well-established popular icon who did not have anything left to prove and who did not feel the pressure to keep churning out hit records. In fact, it could be argued that it is precisely because he enjoyed such artistic freedom from the mid-'50s on that he was able to produce albums of such consistently high quality. It is also perhaps why, with very few exceptions, he stayed away from recording more contemporary material. When he did so, it was mostly Nashville-style country pop, as in 1963's *Bing Crosby Sings the Great Country Hits*, which is not one of his most exciting outings anyway, or contemporary show tunes, as in 1968's *Thoroughly Modern Bing*, which is not as thoroughly modern as the title might indicate. And then, in 1968, the year after the Summer of Love, around the same time the Beatles released their *White Album*, Bing started down a new and ultimately short-lived pathway—he entered the studio to cut an album of contemporary songs, including one by the Fab Four, that would be issued under the odd title of *Hey Jude/Hey Bing*.

Never released in the digital era, except as an inferior-sounding CD-R with no liner notes available from Amazon at the time of this writing, *Hey Jude/Hey Bing* ranks as one of Crosby's most obscure LPs, as well as one of the most harshly criticized by fans and critics alike. For instance, in his book *The Crosby Years*, producer Ken Barnes describes it as "by far [Bing's] worst album of the sixties," noting that "his vocal range [has] now shrunk to barely an octave and a third" and calling the readings of the songs "lackluster" and the arrangements "dull." Barnes firmly states that "by and large this is an album to forget" and claims that "Bing himself disliked it intensely." Documental evidence, however, suggests that perhaps Crosby's dislike of the record was not as intense as Barnes may have thought, since he performed some of its songs on television more than once following its release and appears to be rather satisfied with the finished product in some of his personal correspondence. In a January 1969 letter to the then-editor of *BING Magazine*, Frank Murphy, Bing writes:

> "I've done an album lately, which I believe might have some kind of chance for a moderate success. At least, it's the first thing I've done in some time that I had any confidence in. There are some very good songs in it, I think. . . . The production is very good on the album—some very fine orchestrations, and excellent musicianship."

A few months later, in April 1969, writing to Jim Harman, one of his British fans, Crosby defines the LP in a positive way as a collection of "some of the popular songs of the day done somewhat in the same manner as the young people are doing them, with probably some new touches that might amuse or entertain you." Finally, in May of that same year Bing confesses to radio show host John Elwood that "it was quite exciting, working with an orchestra of this type, and I was thrilled by the arrangements," before going on to intimate that there might be similar sessions with producer Jimmy Bowen at the helm in the near future, something which, as far as we know, never materialized.



Whether Crosby truly liked the album or whether he felt obliged to say so because it was his latest outing at the time, there does not seem to be any doubt that *Hey Jude/Hey Bing* was the brainchild of Jimmy Bowen, a New Mexico-born producer who had come a long way from his early days as a rock and roll singer and songwriter of "Party Doll" fame, a song he co-wrote in

1957 with his friend Buddy Knox. By the time he collaborated with Crosby on this project, he had graduated to producing pop hits by the likes of Frank Sinatra (most famously "Strangers in the Night"), Sammy Davis Jr., and Dean Martin. Bowen had just launched his own independent label, Amos Records, when he approached Crosby, and according to his own account in his 1997 autobiography, *Rough Mix* (Simon & Schuster), working with Der Bingle was a wish come true for him, though it is not clear how familiar he was with the crooner's current output, because he claims that "Bing was pushing seventy and hadn't cut an album in years." It was apparently Bowen's idea to go contemporary on this project: "Because the big song of 1968 was the Beatles' 'Hey Jude,' I thought an LP titled *Hey Jude/Hey Bing* with a cover version would be a trip." Yet when Bowen visited Crosby in his California home, proclaiming that "if we're going to sell records we have to make a modern album," Bing did not seem to be very enthusiastic about the song selections and simply "shrugged [and] said okay." This lack of enthusiasm on Crosby's part, along with the fact that the tunes were mostly selected by Bowen, may very well account for the rather uneven feel of the finished record.

The whole album was cut over the course of two sessions on November 21 and 25, 1968 at Hollywood's United Recorders Studio, with Bowen conducting the orchestra and overseeing the dates. Even though Ken Barnes credits Jimmie Haskell as the arranger, in reality Glen D. Hardin (later well known for his work with Elvis Presley in the 1970s) handled most of the writing, with three charts arranged by Haskell and one by Mike Post, best known as a composer of theme songs for television shows. Crosby was not too far off the mark in his description of the contents of the record as "the popular songs of the day . . . with probably some new touches," since most of the tunes were newly minted and had been hits in or around 1968, with at least two of them ("Hey Jude" and "Those Were the Days") somehow connected to the Beatles. What does not seem as accurate is Crosby's claim that the songs are approached "in the same manner as the young people are doing them." The use of three different arrangers probably does not help the overall cohesion of the album, but it seems obvious to the most casual of listeners that the charts are attempting to reproduce the kind of sound that graced the country pop-oriented LPs with which Dean Martin was having great success on Reprise at the time, most of which were produced by Bowen himself. The main problem is that, with a few exceptions, the arrangements on *Hey Jude/Hey Bing* pale by comparison, and Crosby simply does not achieve the amount of enthusiasm that Dino exudes when handling this type of material.

The title track, "Hey Jude," Paul McCartney's ode to John Lennon's son, Julian, is the perfect example of a fine contemporary song that just does not suit Bing's style in the least, particularly when it is saddled by Post's bombastic arrangement, which does not take a sad song and make it better. By the time we reach the end, we are actually relieved that the outro, full of those "na-na-na-na"s, is nowhere near as long as on the Beatles' original version. Wig Wiggins has reminded me that this version of "Hey Jude" was included in one of the volumes of the Rhino Records series *Golden Throats: Celebrity Rock Oddities*, along with rarities by Mae West, Mel Tormé, Cassius Clay, Jack Jones, William Shatner, and Leonard Nimoy, among others. While Bing singing "Hey Jude" could be rightly seen as an oddity, the truth is it is not worse than Elvis' reading from the 1970s or the tunes by Shatner and Nimoy featured in that collection.

"Little Green Apples" is a different matter: penned by country songwriter Bobby Russell as a sort of thinking man's love song for that most eccentric of country vocalists, Roger Miller, it was actually a bigger hit for O.C. Smith at the time and was even recorded by Patti Page, among a host of others. Though Haskell's grandiose brass introduction does not bode well, Bing handles the rather monotonous melody with elegance. Crosby apparently liked the song well enough to record a very different swinging arrangement of it with the Count Basie orchestra for *Bing 'n' Basie*, his 1972 meeting with the Basieites.

Dave Burgess's "Livin' on Lovin'" is a prime example of the contemporary country-pop sound that Bowen had perfected with Dino on Reprise, with plenty of choirs and heavy accents on the rhythm section, which sounds almost as prominent as the singer in the mix. This is one of Bing's finest performances on this album, greatly improving on the reading by yodeling country star Slim Whitman, which is the other version of this tune with which I am familiar.

Another highlight of *Hey Jude/Hey Bing* is "Just for Tonight," one of those soft ballads for which Alabama-born songwriter Baker Knight was known (another one

would be, for instance, "Lonesome Town," which Knight had composed in the late '50s for Ricky Nelson). This one seems tailor-made for Crosby's voice, and he definitely sounds engaged and very comfortable throughout, aided by a Hardin arrangement that mostly stays out of his way. Bing steps into folkish territory on Joni Mitchell's excellent "Both Sides Now," which appears to have been a favorite of classic pop singers at the time, cut by Sinatra and Robert Goulet, to name but two. Haskell's chart is one of the smoothest on the LP, dominated by quiet strings and brass, and Bing delivers the poetic, melancholic lyrics with conviction, though one somehow senses that world-weary folk-era anthems may not be his forte.

Crosby then takes a trip to the Music City as he tackles "Lonely Street," a fine ballad written by the talented country singer and songwriter Carl Belew, co-author of Nashville Sound classics such as "Am I That Easy to Forget." The song is taken at a rather slow tempo, and with its prominent choirs and country beat, it certainly would not be out of place in 'Bing Crosby Sings the Great Country Hits', that most Nashville-esque of Crosby albums. Bing picks up the pace somewhat on Sonny Curtis's "The Straight Life," yet another decidedly contemporary country ditty and one of the tunes he pitched on television after the release of *Hey Jude/Hey Bing*. It is a charming song, but it is saddled by Bing's purposefully Southern pronunciation of some words, and though he was a "connoisseur of great wines," it is as hard to believe him when he sings about imagining himself as a drifter as it is to picture Dean Martin learning anything in a hobo jungle on his version of Merle Haggard's "I Take a Lot of Pride in What I Am."

Bowen's strong accents on the rhythm section are back on Carl Sigman's "It's All in the Game," based on a melody written in the 1910s by future U.S. Vice President Charles G. Dawes. Bing is reaching back about ten years here, since this song had been a hit for Virginian Tommy Edwards in 1958, and even though the Hardin arrangement comes across as a little busy and Crosby's phrasing and pitch sound unsure here and there, it is a creditable performance of a modern pop standard.

With its late-'50s feel, Allan Reuss, Rainey Robinson, and Tommy Karen's "More and More" had been a hit for Andy Williams a few months before Crosby's recording of it, which is yet another strong, self-assured reading of a charming song.

Hey Jude/Hey Bing is bookended by two Beatles-related tunes: the opening track was written by Paul McCartney, and the album closer is associated with McCartney protégée Mary Hopkin, who cut it for the Beatles' Apple Records in 1968, though it was covered by countless artists, including the indefatigable Crooning Troubadour, Nick Lucas himself. With its mandolin and Dixieland jazz breaks, "Those Were the Days" is a throwback to an earlier era; in fact, its composer, Gene Raskin, set the lyrics to the tune of an old Russian song, which accounts for its rather exotic sound. Always a fan of anything Dixieland, Bing feels understandably comfortable here, delivering a very appropriate closing number for what may be the most forgotten entry in his long discography.

As overlooked as *Hey Jude/Hey Bing* has become half a century after its original release, many of the reviews at the time were surprisingly positive, and Canadian critic John Murphy, writing in the *Winnipeg Free Press* in March 1969 even notes that "Bing is getting much air play and sales are beginning to take shape right across the country, and it has been a while, hasn't it?" An unnamed British reviewer in the *Daily Mirror* calls the LP "a definite winner" in May 1969, and two months later, *The Gramophone* proclaims that "Bing Crosby has lost none of its mellow warmth of voice."

Bowen states that sales reached about 50,000, which sounds like a respectable figure for an album by a septuagenarian crooner in the age of Flower Power. Whether he truly liked this project or not, the truth is Crosby would not record too much contemporary-sounding material over the last nine years of his life. Also, the fact that *Hey Jude/Hey Bing* has not been properly reissued on CD has not helped its reputation among Crosby fans. After all, with all its highs and lows, its occasionally odd song choices, and the obvious lack of enthusiasm on Bing's part on some of the selections, this is an album that deserves the digital treatment—if only to please Crosby completists.

Anton Garcia-Fernandez

Redeeming Bing Crosby, the Voice of Christmas

Irish America magazine, the leading national glossy publication of Irish interest in North America, had this great article in its issue of December 22.

Bing Crosby's "White Christmas" is the best-selling single of all time. Why have his other accomplishments been largely forgotten?

Bing Crosby was once considered the greatest crooner of all and his recording of "White Christmas" remains the best-selling single of all time, with an estimated 100 million copies sold world-wide. And yet the distortion of Bing Crosby's accomplishments and reputation has been as remarkable as his career. Here, we debunk many of the myths that have circulated since the singer's death in 1977.

Bing Crosby died on a golf course near Madrid, Spain, on October 14, 1977.

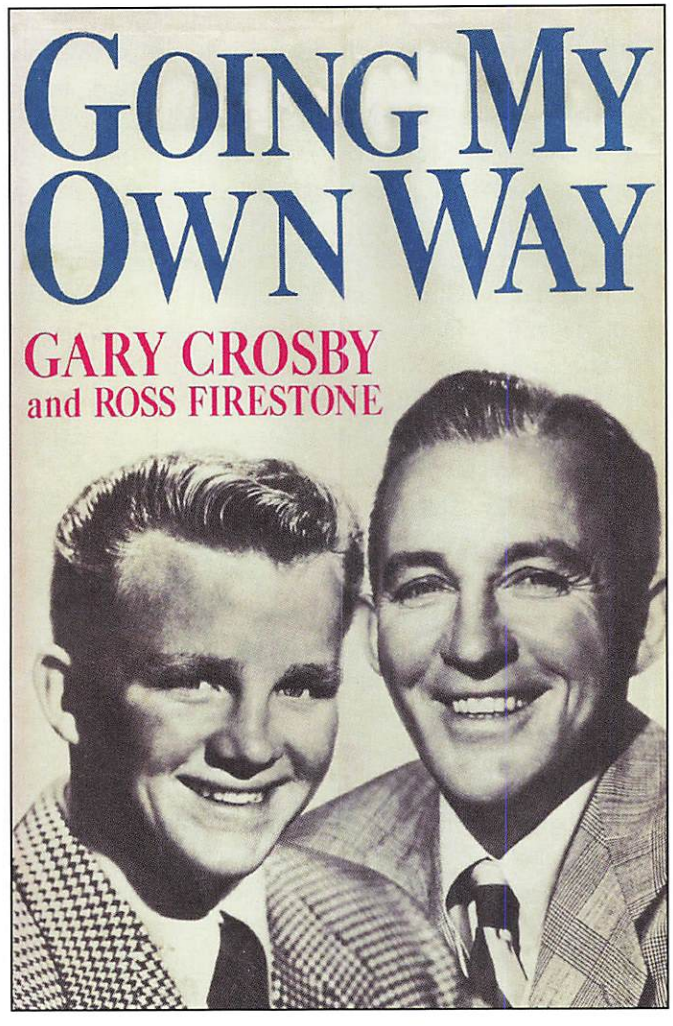
He was 74 and well past his career peak years which spanned the 1930s to 1950s, a time when he was considered the biggest star in the world. Nevertheless, his death triggered an incredible demand for his records. So many sales were made that MCA (Decca) had to utilize other companies to meet the need to produce more than a million discs a day.

In the years following his death, however, apart from the annual resurrection of his music and films at Christmas time, Crosby's artistic accomplishments have been in large part forgotten or ignored.

In 1998, *Newsweek* failed to include Crosby on its list of the 100 greatest voices of the century. And, even more disturbing, the American Film Institute left him off its list of the 100 most successful film stars of all time even though Crosby had been nominated for three Academy Awards, and was chosen as Best Actor once. He was a top 10 box office draw for 15 years – number one box office attraction for an astounding five consecutive years in the 1940's. And he was highly respected by Hollywood's elite. The great director Frank Capra said Crosby was one of the 10 best actors he ever worked with, and David O. Selznick described Bing as "the smartest man in movies."

So what happened?

The reasons for the tarnish on the Crosby legacy are many. Gary Giddins, Village Voice columnist and musicologist, who authored the 2002 book on the singer *Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams – The Early Years, 1903 to 1940*, feels that Crosby's reputation was broadsided after his death by two vicious books that inaccurately portrayed him as a Daddy Dearest-type character. Robert Slatzer wrote *Bing Crosby the Hollow Man*, and Bing's alcoholic eldest son Gary wrote *Going My Own Way*.



Both these books had a powerful effect on the public, and comedians led by Joan Rivers had a field day, asserting Mr. Everyman was in reality a monster.

After carefully tracing each major allegation in these books back to its source, Giddins' detailed research established that many of the contentions were untrue. He concluded that Hollow Man contained half-truths and no truths for the most part. In fact, the Slatzer book's main information source, Crosby pal Al Rinker, was so incensed that he later wrote a journal correcting *Hollow Man*'s numerous errors.

Giddins also recorded nine hours of Gary Crosby on tape. Crosby's son's most damaging charge was that his father had beaten him and his three brothers. Crosby, of course, came from an era when physical discipline of children was the norm. But as Giddins correctly observed, there is a big difference between spanking and child abuse. "When I would challenge certain allegations in his book with my own research, he would say, `I don't remember writing that, I was drunk at the time.'"

Crosby's remaining son from his first marriage, Phillip, described his father as the greatest dad in the world.

Another preposterous allegation making the rounds was that Crosby had smashed the head of his hunting dog, in a fit of rage.

Giddins finally traced that fabrication to a reluctant source who eventually claimed that it came from Gary Crosby. Gary vehemently denied the story and noted that his father loved animals.

Whether by design or through ignorance, the distortion of Crosby's accomplishments has been as remarkable as his career.

Until the Giddins book was published, few people knew about Crosby's extraordinary contribution to equal opportunities for black entertainers.

He was a trailblazer who went contrary to tradition and had the Mills Brothers and other black entertainers as frequent guests on his top-rated radio show. Incredibly, at its peak, Crosby's audience reached 50 million listeners, so the benefits to black entertainers cannot be overstated.

In the early 1930's he defied Hollywood moguls and was solely responsible for giving Louis Armstrong top billing in one of his movies. This marked the first time an African American had top billing in an otherwise white film.

HAPPIEST OF ALL HIS HAPPY HITS!
PENNIES from HEAVEN
Bing CROSBY
MADGE EVANS • EDITH FELLOWS
LOUIS ARMSTRONG and His Famous Swing Band
Directed by NORMAN McLEOD
An EMANUEL COHEN Production
A COLUMBIA PICTURE

For his part, Armstrong held Crosby in high regard, not just as a fair-minded person but as a singer. In 1990 when *Life* magazine selected its list of the 100 most important Americans of the 20th century, both Crosby and Armstrong made the list, and Armstrong calling Crosby the greatest singer of all, commented, "that cat can wail." Only two other musicians made the list: Bob Dylan and Elvis Presley.

Unfortunately, as Giddins book explores, the very qualities which made Crosby a national icon during the World War II era, later worked against him. During that war, a poll of U.S. troops was conducted by Yank magazine. The results recognized Crosby "as the person who has done more for the morale of overseas servicemen than any other entertainer." However, being cool, detached and laid back didn't seem to work in the nuclear age. This was also the time when a younger, hot Sinatra resurrected his career and the arrival of Elvis Presley signaled the emergence of the rock-and-roll era.

Although Presley, the King of rock and roll, died the same year as Crosby, his baby boomer fans tend to ignore the image of the bloated, fading superstar who died of a drug overdose at age 42, and still envision him as the svelte sex symbol of their youth. But Bing's greatest years came to a close around the end of the 1950s. Coupled with this is the fact that many of his fans were from the Depression era, and the Greatest Generation who fought in World War II.

To be sure, Bing's recording and film successes continued into the 1960s, but on a much smaller scale. Indeed even into the 1970s the elderly Crosby's brilliance was evident in his work with Rosemary Clooney, the Joey Bushkin Quartet and Buddy Bregman. And who can forget the wildly popular duet version of the "Little Drummer Boy" from the 1970's, when a frail Crosby clearly steals the show from rock idol David Bowie? But many of today's middle-aged people only remember the grandfatherly version of Crosby as seen on those popular TV Christmas specials. The young, vital Crosby and that gorgeous voice and commanding screen presence are unknown to them.

A 1970s interview with Barbara Waiters didn't help Crosby's reputation, but it did succeed in making him appear to be an out of touch prude. Relying on morals stressed in his own upbringing, he answered a hypothetical question by saying he would have nothing to do with his own daughter if she lived with a man outside marriage.

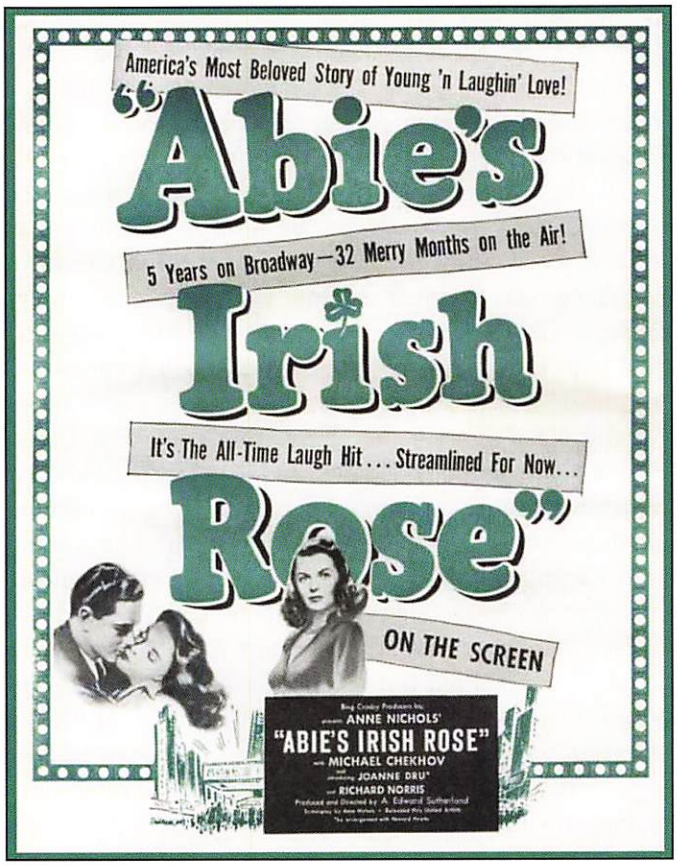
It wouldn't be the first time that Crosby's Catholicism came under attack.

Barry Ulanov's 1948 biography, *The Amazing Crosby*, which was perhaps the first substantive book about Crosby's career, lends credence to those who believe Crosby's reputation was in part demolished because he was too successful portraying Catholic priests.

In his book Ulanov refers to "the anti-Crosby crusade which in late 1946 and 1947 had assumed sinister proportions. Hollywood's Communists, as a part of their general anti-Catholic position, singled out Bing Crosby, the most prominent lay Catholic of our time, as the logical victim of their anti-Roman Catholic campaign. With frightening regularity they set rumors in motion about Bing. They even went so far as to prepare a movie roughly paralleled on his life, with some effective distortions of the true Crosby story, to undermine his career."

According to Ulanov, such people were in the front ranks of those who found fault with Crosby's politics and his movie making as an independent producer. When a controversy arose about the quality of the Crosby film *Abie's Irish Rose*, (a movie about the romance between a Jewish boy and an Irish Catholic girl) a prominent rabbi took time out to laud Crosby, "whose record of service to Jewish and minority causes is unparalleled." How ironic that decades later, among the charges found to be without merit was the accusation

that Bing, who had actually received hate mail calling him a "Jew Lover," was anti-Semitic.



Thankfully, the years since the 100th anniversary of Crosby's birth have seen a concerted effort to redeem and contextualize his reputation. In addition to Giddins' inspiring book in 2002, Hofstra University sponsored a Crosby Conference in Hempstead, Long Island, New York, to examine the singer's impact on American culture.

Academics from across the country, as well as musicians, composers, critics and disc jockeys, presented papers and conducted sessions detailing Crosby's influence. More than 350 people from around the world attended, and a major participant was the International Crosby Circle, headquartered in England and dedicated to the "preservation of Crosby's incomparable musical legacy."

A letter from Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern citing Bing's status as the greatest Irish-American entertainer of his age, and noting that Crosby's maternal grandparents (Harrington) came from Schull, County Cork, was read out at the opening ceremony.

Not to be outdone, Crosby's alma mater, Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington held a symposium from May 16 to May 18 in 2003 to commemorate his 100th birthday.

More recently, in 2016, Crosby's son, Nathaniel, a professional golfer, authored a book with John Strege called *18 Holes with Bing: Golf, Life, and Lessons from Dad*, a love letter to his father's teachings and parenting. Speaking with **Fox News** that year, Nathaniel offered an explanation of the way he sees his book in conversation with his brother Gary's:

Well the four half-brothers have been deceased for quite a while. I don't want to be rebutting a book that my half-brother wrote 35 years ago but the book that Gary Crosby wrote about my dad gave a little controversy to an otherwise legendary figure who had no negative publicity in a 50 year entertainment career.

If one were to read my half-brother's book it was more of a self-critique, a lot about his alcoholism. The focus of the controversy about dad was on corporal punishment which every single parent from every single upstanding family from the 1930s all through the 1970s employed at times. It wasn't until the 1980s that corporal punishment started to get restricted or reduced. To this day it's still emphasized in the Catholic Church as a reasonable way of raising children. In that time when those boys were growing up, corporal punishment was in the mainstream.

Gary was there when dad was sick. We got more time with Gary. And when Gary wrote the book in 1981 or 82 it was only two or three years after Joan Crawford's daughter wrote "Mommie Dearest," so let's say it became a successful business model to knock your parent in a book and you could get an audience. I chalk it up to that.

Dad was an incredible parent. It really burned a bridge in Gary's relationship with the other three boys after that book was written. They were crushed that Gary wrote that book.

Crosby enthusiasts are quick to point out that Crosby's stellar recording career has been ignored in the mainstream media. As far back as June 1960, the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce gave him a platinum disc for record sales of over 200 million. And some have estimated his current sales at over a billion. Certainly no current pop star is close to Bing Crosby in record sales. An astonishing fact when you consider that much of Crosby's reign as the number one pop singer, when he had many million-selling records, many Americans couldn't even afford to buy phonographs needed to play records. Indeed, a single record cost close to a dollar, at a time when $40 per week was a good wage.

And yet a 2003 Associated Press dispatch circulated throughout the country about the death of Maurice Gibb of the Bee Gees stated the following: "They sold more than 110 million records, placing them fifth in pop history behind Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Michael Jackson and Paul McCartney."

No mention was made of Crosby's record sales which are in the hundreds of millions. In fact, to set the record straight, Joel Whitburn, considered the foremost authority on record sales, compiled a list of the top eight best-selling artists from 1940 to 1996. Bing Crosby was number one by a comfortable margin over Elvis at that time.

Sinatra, who didn't earn his first million selling

record on his own until 1964 (at which point Crosby had more than 20) is listed eighth in all-time record sales. His sales are shown as less than half of Crosby's.

Other statistics from Gary Giddins indicate Crosby had 396 charted records in his career, and no one else is even close. Sinatra is listed third with 209 and Elvis had 149. And Crosby had more number one hits than any other artist (38). But as Giddins states "all these stats would mean nothing if Crosby's art did not merit rediscovery."

Exactly. None of the other things will matter once a person listens to that beautiful, golden baritone voice from its peak years, and enjoys the exquisite phrasing and perfect timing of the singer who has influenced more singing careers than anyone else.

The great Tony Bennett tried to put Bing's accomplishments in perspective when he said: "If you took the Rolling Stones, Madonna and Britney Spears and put them together, they wouldn't be as big as Crosby was."

Malcolm Macfarlane, the Englishman, who edits BING magazine, expanded that thought. "It's like Tom Hanks, an Academy Award winner and top box office star, also being the top vocalist in the country and having a top TV show at the same time (it was radio in Bing's case)."

Vocalist Margaret Whiting, a participant at the Crosby Conference put it more succinctly: "Bing was easily the finest singer we ever had in America. He could sing a cookbook or a dictionary and make it sound good."

Bob Lydon

(This article originally appeared in Irish America's *October / November 2003 issue and has been updated.)*

Bing Crosby fans rejoice!

It was good to see Martin McQuade prominently featured in the Brooklyn Reporter on December 20.

Lovers of the singer-songwriter will be happy to learn that Bing Crosby Enterprises, in association with Universal Music Enterprises, has released two new CDs on Friday, December 8, both of which contain extremely rare and previously unreleased newly discovered tracks from the late legend.

Bay Ridge resident Martin McQuade, considered an "expert in all facets of Bing Crosby's career," served as a production assistant for both CDs, *Among My Souvenirs: More Treasures from the Crosby Archive* and *New Tricks: 60th Anniversary Deluxe Edition,* and also wrote the liner notes for the latter record.

"When I was asked to write the liner notes, I was through the roof," said McQuade, who works as a consultant with BCE, which supervises the release of Bing Crosby's work. "Since I was a child, my father, who was a motion picture projectionist, instilled in me a love for Bing. As I listened to records of his and watched him on TV, I became enamored with him," he continued.

McQuade explained that *New Tricks* has a special meaning to him, as the original album, which was released in 1957, was given to him as a child by his father for Christmas. This most recent release includes 12 bonus tracks, including nine that were previously unreleased. It features Crosby accompanied by a trio led by jazz pianist Buddy Cole.

Among My Souvenirs features a two-disc collection of 35 previously unissued tracks, including live concert recordings, radio performances and more. One of the most notable tracks, according to McQuade, is a 1968 recording of Crosby alongside one of the most famous Motown acts, Diana Ross and the Supremes. It also features a recording of Crosby whistling live at a concert at Fall River in Los Angeles.

"I heard the concert over the phone and it's an extraordinary performance of Bing whistling live," said McQuade. "Whistling is a tough thing to accomplish. If you make one mistake you're out on a limb.That's an exciting tape."

Those wishing to purchase the CDs may do so on Amazon.com — *Among My Souvenirs* for $15.99 and *New Tricks* for $8.59.

Jonathan Sperling

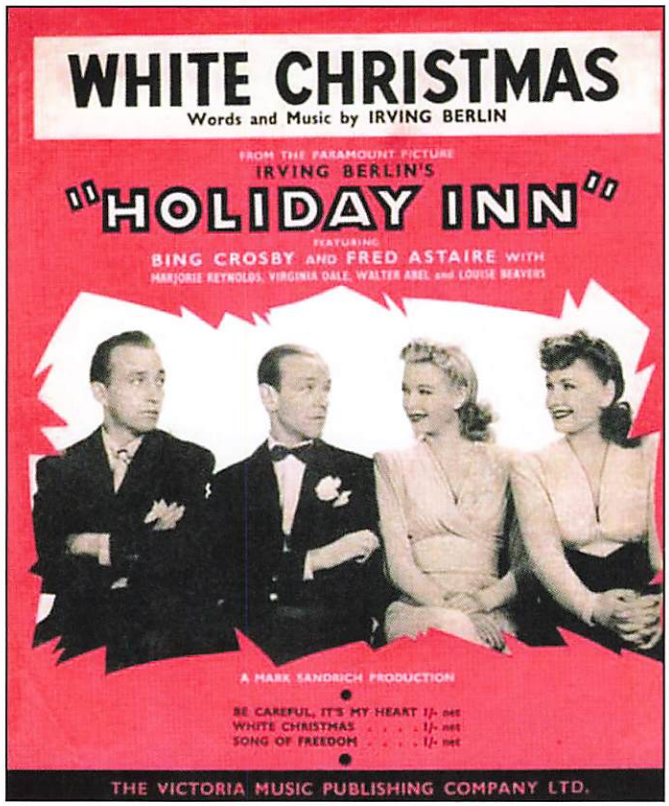
'White Christmas' at 75: A Snapshot of the Most Successful Song in Music History

It was good to see that the influential Billboard magazine had a feature about Bing and his most famous song in its edition of December 20.

It's a typical sunny day in Jupiter, Florida and Nathaniel Crosby, the seventh son of Bing, is fresh from the golf course. It was a habit, and later a profession, he picked up from his famous father who passed away when the younger Crosby was 16. While Bing charted an astounding 386 songs between 1927 and 1962, there's one track above all that's more associated with the legendary singer than any other. "I think people identify him with Christmas just as much as Jesus and Santa Claus," Nathaniel jokes. "We have some downloads of dad's stuff we play, and if I have a couple of tequilas you'll hear me try to chime in."

When Crosby's iconic "White Christmas" came out 75 years ago this year, it was welcomed as readily as a sleigh full of gifts, becoming one of the most successful songs in the history of recorded music. (With 50,000,000 copies sold, the Guinness Book of World Records dubs it the best-selling single of all time.) Arguably helping launch an entire genre of Christmas music, its

melancholy lyrics and memorable melody have been covered by an immense array of artists, with its sentiments soothing a grieving and terrified nation navigating its way through a bloody, far-away and all-consuming war. But despite its subsequent stature and accolades, it was all originally conceived as a simple joke.


WHITE CHRISTMAS
Words and Music by IRVING BERLIN
FROM THE PARAMOUNT PICTURE
IRVING BERLIN'S
"HOLIDAY INN"
FEATURING
BING CROSBY AND FRED ASTAIRE WITH
MARJORIE REYNOLDS, VIRGINIA DALE, WALTER ABEL and LOUISE BEAVERS
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"I discovered [Irving] Berlin began writing the song as a parody," explains Jody Rosen, who penned the 2007 book *White Christmas: The Story of an American Song* about the track's history and impact. "It started as kind of comic novelty song, lampooning sentimental 19th century ballads. It was only after Berlin wrote the song's famous chorus that he realized that he'd struck gold: his 'satirical' sentimental ballad worked great as a straight-up sentimental ballad, played straight. 'White Christmas' was accident, in other words."

The ironies about the song's success only grow from there. Not only was Irving Berlin Jewish, but Christmas was anything but a happy time for the man who would gain a reputation as one of the greatest songwriters in American history after writing everything from "There's No Business Like Show Business" to the nation's theme song itself, "God Bless America." An immigrant who grew up dirt poor in New York's Lower East Side, his first son, Irving Berlin Jr., died a month after birth on Christmas Eve 1928, which (as legend has it) led to Berlin visiting his grave every Christmas. It was during the writing process of the 1942 film *Holiday Inn* when Berlin first wrote "White Christmas" for Bing Crosby, then a major movie star. Mary Ellin Barrett, Berlin's daughter, simply boiled down the original goal of the song to Rosen: "She once said to me, 'It was a song sung to a blonde by Bing Crosby.'"

For Crosby and his team, recording and releasing "White Christmas" played into what became a wider plan to shape Crosby's image. "His identity with Christmas was a strategy, I think, of Jack Kapp's," explains Nathaniel of the iconic founder of Decca Records, who fostered Crosby's success. "Just like having dad sing national identity songs or anthems, whether the Irish or Hawaiian or Hispanic songs. He recorded songs that were basically intended to last forever." Recorded in May 1942 and released in July as part of the soundtrack of *Holiday Inn,* "White Christmas" later struck a chord with a country in the heart wrenching throes of World War II with millions of American troops relating to its famous lyrics and dreaming of being home for the holidays. Explains Rosen, "The narrator is recalling a Christmas in the past, 'merry and bright' days that are now remote and not quite attainable. The song distills the feelings of nostalgia and longing that surround Christmas. For many people Christmas is a melancholy, disappointing time; it's an anticlimax."

"If Decca [Records] can meet the demand, dealers say Bing Crosby's 'White Christmas' will be 1942's top-selling record," *Billboard* reported in the Nov. 14, 1942 issue.

Talk about an understatement.

After topping sales charts that year, Crosby's version of the holiday classic went on to become the best-selling record ever — 50 million copies globally, according to Guinness World Records.

Inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1974, "White Christmas" topped the Holiday Airplay chart in 2008 and has revisited the top 10 of the chart in every holiday season between 2002 and 2016. It's also the most-covered holiday tune of all time: According to streaming service Slacker Radio, nearly 1,500 acts have recorded it, including Taylor Swift and Katy Perry.

The track sat pretty at No. 1 on the charts for 11 weeks, and at the 15th Annual Academy Awards in March 1943 won the Oscar for Best Original Song, later returning to the No. 1 spot that December, repeating the feat again in 1944, America's last holiday season in WWII. Later re-recorded in 1947, the track became so ingrained with Christmas culture that an eponymous smash film was later fashioned around it, which saw Crosby star alongside Danny Kaye. That, too, became a holiday classic. "The movie wasn't until 1954 which was towards the end of dad's career in film," says Nathaniel. "After that, it was played every year on national television before Christmas, when TV was just three stations. At the same time, his radio show was getting millions of listeners a couple times a week. So he had a captive, undivided audience, which led to him (and the song) having a direct relationship with most of the country." In addition, Crosby's annual televised

Christmas variety specials became an American tradition and garnered Super Bowl-sized ratings from the '50s to the '70s. "I was in them from age 5 to 15 and for the finale, we'd always sing 'White Christmas' and wear all of these silly outfits. I'd have to pretend to sing, so I'd be mocked and teased by fellow jocks in school the next day. I was also probably the first guy to have his mic turned off on live television."

Nathaniel (far right) pretends to sing.

Aside from Nathaniel's experience, throughout the intervening seven decades "White Christmas" holds the distinction of being one of the most covered songs of all time, a virtual must for an artist crafting a holiday album. Among them, The Drifters put a doo-wop spin on the track in 1954 (peaking at No. 2 on the R&B Best Sellers in Stores chart), Ella Fitzgerald belted its lyrics in 1960 and Otis Redding posthumously had a bluesy version in 1968. In the '90s, the sax stylings of Kenny G had success with the song, while Garth Brooks' country version was a hit, too. Destiny's Child released their take on the track in 2001 and Taylor Swift dropped an acoustic version in 2009. Even this year, Gwen Stefani's album *You Make It Feel Like Christmas* featured a bubbly version.

"I think it's great that you have newer stars who are doing renditions of the song," says Nathaniel of the song's resonance. "But I think dad's version will always be synonymous with Christmas."

Rob LeDonne

40 years after death, Bing Crosby's legacy lives on in Elko

Carolyn Schneider, Bing's niece, ensured that the 40th anniversary was not overlooked in Nevada by persuading the Las Vegas Review-Journal to publish an article on November 7.

Nevada history? Well it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that Bing. And it does.

"People who knew of his career were thinking, what is Bing Crosby doing on a cattle ranch? But that's who he was, he wanted to be a regular guy," says Las Vegan Carolyn Schneider, the famed crooner's niece, about the uncle who made Nevada — specifically, Elko — his home away from Hollywood for 14 years, in between hit records, concerts, movie-headlining and radio stardom. "He liked to stop in at the drug store that had a counter in it so he could get a milkshake."

Soon, the eternal presence of the entertainment icon dubbed "Der Bingle" with his "bababa-bing" singing style will re-emerge as the holiday season arrives.

Try finding a mall, restaurant or outdoor speaker not soothing us via the silken sounds of his timeless "White Christmas" (generally regarded as the world's best-selling single, with sales exceeding 100 million copies). With this year marking the 40th anniversary of Crosby's death on Oct. 14, 1977, Schneider remembers that the man who made all those "Road" movies with Bob Hope enjoyed escaping the hectic Hollywood life by traveling the road to Nevada.

"He just fell in love with the area," says Schneider, who authored "Bing: On the Road to Elko" and "Me and Uncle Bing," both affectionate memoirs that include chronicles of Crosby's love affair with Elko beginning in 1944, when he purchased the Quarter Circle S, the first of seven cattle ranches he owned until 1958. "He never acted like a movie star when he was there. The ranches were his getaway, where he could fish on his own property, fire a gun if he wanted to, and he made friends with all his neighbors."

Regarded as America's biggest star when he took a shine to the rustic town — having scored a Best Actor Oscar for portraying Father O'Malley in 1944's *Going My Way* — the avid hunter and fly fisherman caught Western fever after starring in the 1936 cowboy musical *Rhythm on the Range*. Racking up Elko ranches including those named the 7Js, PX and Spring Creek Ranch, Crosby developed a reputation as a seasoned cattle and horse rancher. As he was quoted in the biography, "Call Me Lucky," Crosby cherished never being pestered for an autograph, or to give performances or do anything but "mind my own business."

So comfy was the crooner in the environs of Elko that he would stroll around town minus his hairpiece, and was moved to become involved in the community as well. "The Silver State Stampede (the oldest rodeo in

Nevada) was on hiatus for 13 years and he was instrumental in bringing that back. It's been up and running since then," says Martin T. Smith, author of "The Nevada Trivia Game," noting that it was a fund-raiser for the local hospital. "A lot of people admired him for that."

Adding that he is "very well-remembered," Toni Mendive, archivist for Elko's Northeastern Nevada Museum, home to a Crosby exhibit, says he helped raise the town's profile by holding the world premiere of his 1951 film *Here Comes the Groom* in Elko and supported local businesses. "He and the mayor would take pictures with nearly every business owner in town, just to be with them and help the community," Mendive says.

As a gesture of affection and respect, Elko named Crosby honorary mayor in 1948 — the first one in Nevada history — and he was equally appreciated by the area's Native-Americans. Adopted into the Shoshone-Paiute tribes, Crosby was dubbed "Man of Many Songs," an honor that brought him to tears. "He believed in hard work and that's why the Indians embraced him," Smith says. "He helped a lot of people and not just by throwing money at them. He hired a lot of people as an employer."

Bing rides the range with his sons Phillip and Dennis.

Those jobs were on his multiple ranches, which also figured into the parenting of his four sons from his first marriage to wife Dixie — Gary, Lindsay and twins Dennis and Phillip — which later erupted in controversy. Determined that they not become spoiled Hollywood kids, Crosby put them to work on the land.

"They had jobs just like regular ranch hands and he paid them the same way," Schneider says. "That's the kind of person he was." However, in his scathing 1983 book, "Going My Own Way," Gary accused his father of physical and emotional abuse, triggering a scandal and media coverage, including a piece headlined "Daddy Dearest?" in People magazine.

"I refuse to read the book," Schneider says. "I know Uncle Bing was a disciplinarian. Gary didn't want to obey the rules of the house. I know he was punished, how severely I don't know." None of the sons took to ranching, as Crosby had hoped and, as Smith notes, "it was pretty tragic for every one of his sons." Emotional problems, alcoholism, drunk driving arrests and multiple divorces beset the brothers. All four are now deceased: Gary from lung cancer, Phillip from a heart attack, and Lindsay and Dennis from self-inflicted shotgun wounds.

After his wife's passing from ovarian cancer in 1952, Crosby became less of a presence in Elko, finally selling off all his properties by 1958, and eventually marrying his second wife, Kathryn, with whom he had three more children. "Dixie was very much a part of the Elko experience and then she was gone," Schneider says. "There were a lot of painful memories."

Yet Crosby left a lasting mark on Elko, which, his niece says, deserves recognition. "Can you believe there isn't a Crosby Street or a Bing Avenue?" she says. Adds Smith: "He probably should get some kind of accolade."

Professional accomplishments and personal history can combine for a complex legacy, as it does with many entertainers, and Bing Crosby's reads: Singer/Actor/Pop Cultural Icon/Nevadan.

Steve Bornfeld

It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Bing

Our member Jack Boyle has been broadcasting his radio show dedicated to Bing for some time and he was interviewed about this in November by jazz author Debbie Burke. Ms Burke duly posted this on her blog at https://debbieburkeauthor.com/ and we have pleasure in reproducing it here.

Bing Crosby Fan Base Gets Its Own Radio Show with Jack Boyle, Radio Host

His movies show a humorous side, but Bing Crosby is most known as the crooner extraordinaire to compare all others with. Contemporary pop stars and musicians in genres like jazz and big band play homage to him; Baby Boomers love him, still; but think of the loyalty one man has to The Bing, to have conceived of a radio show that's been honoring him for three years. Jack Boyle, who undoubtedly knows more trivia about the singer than your average buff, has a certain joy when he talks about the radio show. It's broadcast from upstate New York and streams worldwide.

Is there a resurgence in Bing Crosby's music?

There is an unabatingly loyal audience for Bing Crosby both in the U.S. and especially in the U.K. This reality

has not been reflected in the major entertainment media, which, with the onset of rock, failed to positively exploit the Crosby audience in their marketing, with the exception of the seasonal promotions at Christmas.

A recent PBS documentary on Bing featuring members of his family was helpful in generating renewed interest in his legacy, as well as the work of the International Club Crosby (which publishes BING magazine), and Bing Crosby Enterprises, which issues newly restored albums and films, and plays Crosby content 24/7 on Bing Crosby Internet Radio (bingcrosby.com).

How did your radio show come about?

I approached Bud Williamson, president of Neversink Media Group, about three years ago, and suggested the creation of a show featuring Bing's songs with the title "Bing for the Seasons." It was slated for Hudson Valley Public Radio's JAZZ FM, which airs the first Sunday of the month at 7 pm ET, and the third Sunday of the month at 9 am ET, airing at 88.1 FM, 106.3 FM, 106.5 FM, streaming worldwide at **HVPR.ORG**, also at **http://jazzfm.org/bing-for-the-seasons/**.

Were there previous hosts?

No, I am the original and current host. I am also fortunate to have a wonderful producer, Gavin Burt, who assures a seamless broadcast.

What do you like most about his music?

His amazing ability to convey his vocal talent in a variety of genres including jazz, blues, Country Western, Irish, religious, Hawaiian, forays into French, German and Spanish language albums, even rock, with aplomb. Most of all, it is his compelling voice, which was in the higher range during his early years, and deeper, more mellow later on, with an almost mesmerizing timbre.

Add to this impeccable timing his on-target pitch, articulate use of language and expressive intimacy, and you have an incomparable artist whose influence on future singers was enormous.

How did you come to be interested in him in the first place?

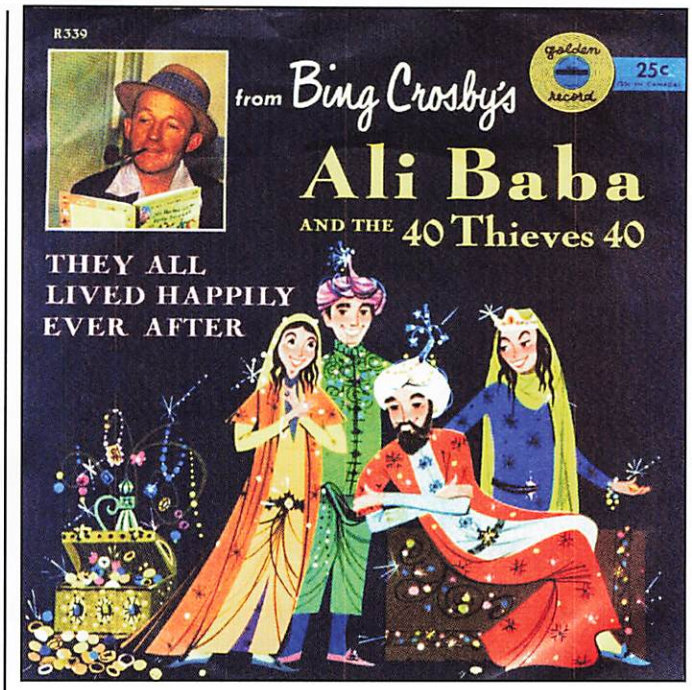
Bing Crosby was a prevailing musical presence from birth. My dad listened to his radio shows, along with 50 million other listeners; there were the Golden Record issues targeted at youngsters like me; the Christmas albums; my older brother's purchase in Canada of albums featuring songs by Bing in his many movie roles; and of course, the premier viewing of *White Christmas* at the movie theater in Malone, New York, along with *High Society* and other films. I was hooked.

Your favorite songs?

Too many to mention, but here a few: *Dinah, Sweet Georgia Brown, My Honey's Lovin' Arms, Love Thy Neighbor, I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams, Just One More Chance, In the Land of Beginning Again, Autumn in New York* (from the *Seasons* album), *Do You Hear What I Hear* and *When A Child is Born.*

Crosby was featured in many loving parodies like the 1936 cartoon "Bingo Crosbyana." Do you know of any current homages to him in pop culture today?

Recent "duets" by major pop stars like Michael Bublé, Justin Bieber and others, with super-imposed images of Bing singing with them.



One of the Golden Record issues.

Talk about his body of work.

Bing made more studio recordings than any other artist. He had the most popular record ever: *White Christmas.* He had 368 charted records, most #1 hits (38), more than The Beatles (24), and Elvis (18). He was the #1 Box Office attraction five times (1944-48); in the top ten 15 times (1934-54). He won an Academy Award for *Going My Way*; he was a major radio star longer than any other performer from 1931-1954 (network), and 1954-1962 (syndication).

He changed radio from live performance to a recorded medium in 1946. He financed and popularized the development of tape, revolutionizing the recording industry. He created the first and longest-running celebrity pro-am golf tournament, and he was the central figure in the development of Del Mar Racetrack.

What kind of audience response do you get from the show?

Enthusiastic and growing

Have you ever spoken with a family member?

His son, Harry, some years ago, regarding a photograph of the family performing that I was happy to pass along to him. I have communicated with grandson, Phil Crosby, Jr., a terrific talent in his own right. Bing's daughter, Mary Crosby, was nice enough to tape an introduction to my show, for which I am most grateful.

Biggest thrill?

Being in the audience as he and his family members, along with Rosemary Clooney and Joe Bushkin,

performed at the Uris Theatre in 1976.

Tell us about the International Club Crosby.

International Club Crosby is the world's longest-running fan club. Its mission is to perpetuate the memory and legacy of Bing Crosby. I have been a dues-paying member for many years.

You are also an author?

I wrote a small tome, **Sunset on the Tracks**. Featuring historic photographs and family photos, it is a 1950's memoir about my blessed childhood in a small town in the foothills of The Adirondacks. Fort Covington, New York, is now celebrating its Bi-Centennial. There is a chapter in the book recalling Bing as a musical backdrop in our home, and the opportunity to see him perform later in life.

Future plans for your Crosby mania?

I look forward to promoting and playing the music of Bing Crosby, whose voice was described by Louis Armstrong as "gold being poured out of a cup."

Debbie Burke

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gord Atkinson, 715-2018 Robertson Rd., Nepean, Ottawa, ON, K2H 1C6, Canada.

Gord's latest book "The Golden Years of Entertainment" is available to Crosby collectors for $20.00 US or Canadian funds or equivalent in British pounds. Write to Gord direct.

John Bassett, "Bingville", 15 Oast Way, Rochford, Essex SS4 1RZ, UK

"Alternate Bing Crosby – Vol. 2". Issued as a companion volume to Colin Pugh's invaluable 1988 publication, this 67-page edition continues the story by examining every alternate Take discovered since that first edition. In total, 131 titles are dealt with in this A4 size publication, currently available at £7.50 (including postage). All remittances in £ sterling should be made payable to John Bassett and sent to him at the address above.

ALSO

Top prices paid for the following 45rpm discs in excellent condition:

7" UK Brunswick 45-05244, 45-05269, 45-05277, 45-05304, 45-05339, 45-05501, 45-05620 and 45-05840. Also: UK STEREO EPs "Bing and Satchmo" (MGM ES 3515), "Join Bing and Sing Along" Vol. 1 (Warner Brothers WSEP 2050), Vol. 2 (WSE 6100) and Vol. 3 (WSE 6103).

Please write to John if you can help.

Susan Craddock, Greenfield, Bedfordshire MK45 5DG (Phone: 01525 713424,

E-mail: susanecraddock@hotmail.com)

Susan writes "I have my father's comprehensive collection of Bing Crosby LP's and wondered if there was any interest in this format these days. It seems such a shame just to take them to the tip when they may be of some interest to someone."

Please contact her if you are interested.

Gwen Harvey, c/o 29 Newton Way, Tongham, Surrey GU10 1BY, UK.

Our long standing member Gwen Harvey has a vast number of scrapbooks about Bing but unfortunately her sight has deteriorated so much that he can no longer view them. She would like to pass them on to Crosby fans without charge.

Anyone interested should contact Gwen's daughter Gale on either 01252 316648 or 07836 528782. The scrapbooks are in Surrey and would have to be collected.

Neil Robinson, Burton-on-Trent, UK

Neil writes: "As I shall be 95 in February, I realise it is time for me to let 78s collection of 570 Bing records go to a younger Bing fan."

Neil asks for bids to be sent to Michael Crampton and the plan is for half of the sale proceeds to be donated to the ICC. The winning bidder will of course have to collect the 78s.

Peta Wright, Sunningdale, Berks, UK (email: peta81@btinternet.com, phone: 01344 625602)

"You may remember I spoke to you after your talk about Bing Crosby on Saga Pearl last November.

I said I had some very old Bing recordings and was keen to find an appreciative home for them. You revealed you were the editor of the Bing Crosby newsletter and would be prepared to put details to your members.

I do not want anything for them but would like them collected if possible. Hoping you can help."

(Editor: Peta has a number of 78 recordings by Bing).

Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia (tel. [03] 9755 3013 – email: deryk@net2000.com.au)

Bi-monthly newsletters are issued by the Society and they can now be received by email if desired. The regular film nights continue and on December 11, *Road to Bali* was shown plus the pilot episode of "The Bing Crosby Show" (the sitcom from 1964/65). In February, the film shown was *High Time* with a Hollywood Palace show in support. The venue is the Library behind the Collingwood Town Hall complex at 11 Stanton St., Abbotsford, Melbourne.

Internet sites:

BING magazine

This site contains a considerable amount of reference material all of which is being updated as new information arises. The site has been visited 1214 times in the last four months. Since the site was redesigned some years ago by Howard Crossland, it has been visited no less than 42,029 times. See www.bingmagazine.co.uk

Crosby Fan World

This bulletin board type site is at:
http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/
Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker.

Other sites well worth a visit are:

www.BingCrosby.com - run by Bing Crosby Enterprises

Bing Crosby on Facebook - run by Bing Crosby Enterprises

Bing Crosby House (on Facebook)
Bing Crosby on Twitter - @Bingconstantly and @Bing_Crosby are the links..
Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby—"The Old Groaner"—The Bing Crosby Fan Page – a Facebook group.
Jack Boyle's "Bing for the Seasons – a Facebook group.
The Early Bing Crosby 1926-1936 a Facebook group administered by Mike Pearl
Jon Oye's Blog – run by ICC stalwart Jon Oye. Go to: http://derbingle.blogspot.com/
The Bing Crosby News Archive - David Lobosco runs this blog at http://bingfan03.blogspot.co.uk/

Steven Lewis' Bing Crosby Internet Museum - See http://www.stevenlewis.info/crosby/

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com, website: www.flias.com/) - A magazine called *Laine Lines* is published three times a year.

International Al Jolson Society, c/o Sandra K. Gerloff, 419 Glenwood Drive, Douglassville, PA 19518, USA (website: www.jolson.org - also on Facebook). A different Jolson radio show can be heard via the web site each week.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, email: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Memory Lane, P O Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England. (www.memorylane.org.uk)
The acclaimed quarterly magazine for lovers of 1920s, 1930s and 1940s music. A *"must"* for 78 RPM collectors. Initial annual subscription only £10 (UK) or £15 (overseas) for readers of BING magazine. (Normal price £15 - UK, £20 - overseas.)
Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-899771, www.sinatramusicsociety.com/). This was founded in 1955. A quarterly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the rest of the world.
Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 003531 8212418). - Meetings now take place at 8:00 pm, second Monday of every month in the Talbot Hotel, Stillorgan, Dublin.

Books 'n' Bing

The Great Jazz and Pop Vocal Albums

by Will Friedwald, Pantheon Books, 2017, Hardcover, 404 double-column pages. ISBN: 978-0375421495, $30.

This new book has been widely welcomed and Anton Garcia-Fernandez takes a look at it for BING magazine.

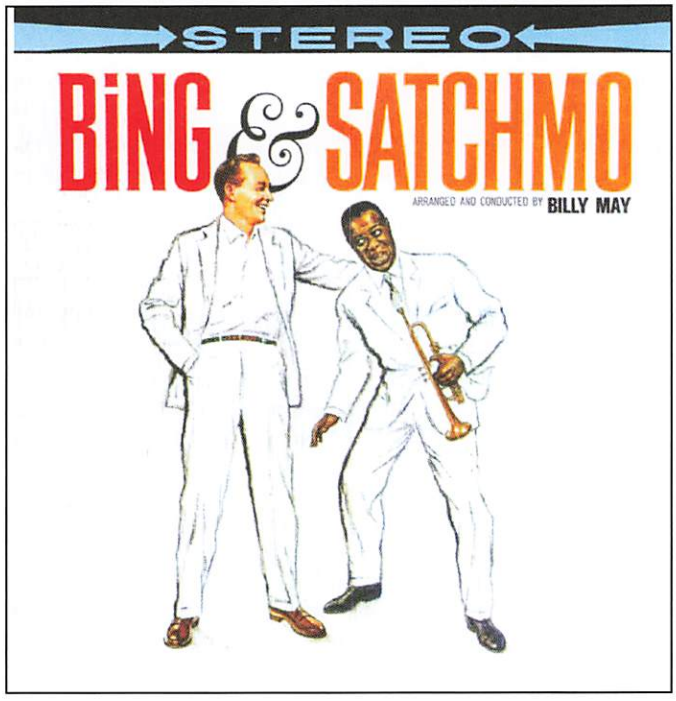
Arguably one of the foremost music critics of today, especially when we consider the subgenres of vocal jazz and classic pop, New York-based Will Friedwald has written a wide variety of extremely valuable books over the last twenty-five years, from his classic study of vocal jazz (*Jazz Singing: America's Great Voices from Bessie Smith to Bebop and Beyond*) to the autobiography of Tony Bennett that he co-authored with the great singer (*The Good Life*) to the most in-depth study of the music of Frank Sinatra (*Sinatra! The Song Is You: A Singer's Art*). Mr. Friedwald has also devoted a volume to analyzing well-known standards from the Great American Songbook (*Stardust Melodies*), another one to biographical studies of the most relevant jazz and pop vocalists and their work (*A Biographical Guide to the Great Jazz and Pop Singers*), and even one to the history of Warner Brothers cartoons. I own, have read, and cherish them all, because I find Mr. Friedwald an extremely knowledgeable and highly readable critic who always succeeds in peppering his writings with the right amount of wit and plenty of ingenious wordplay to keep the reader's attention.

His new book, *The Great Jazz and Pop Vocal Albums* (Pantheon Books), is constructed exactly in that same vein, and as the author explains in the preface, it is the final installment in a trilogy that encompasses *Stardust Melodies* and his *Biographical Guide*, two volumes that concentrated on songs and singers respectively. "This new book," writes Mr. Friedwald, "connects the two: how the great singers have shaped and organized collections of songs into albums." After a highly informative introduction that details the history of the pop music album between 1926 (the famous 78rpm album *To Mother*, which the author cautiously considers as perhaps the first pop album in the modern sense of the term) and 1945 (when Columbia released Sinatra's extremely popular *The Voice* album), the book offers

fifty-one chapters that concentrate on jazz and pop albums that should be a part of the collection of any serious aficionado. Leaving aside the fact that the list reflects, to a certain degree, the author's own subjective take on what records may be essential, it seems clear that Mr. Friedwald has attempted to single out what he calls *standout albums*: "You can tell the standout albums—sometimes even without actually listening to them," Mr. Friedwald explains, "because it seems as if all roads lead to them." That is, the book concentrates on titles that, for one reason or another, have proven not only popular with the record-buying public but also influential among fellow musicians. If we read the book from this standpoint, it is easier to understand Mr. Friedwald's choices (albums by Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Tony Bennett and Bill Evans, Johnny Hartman and John Coltrane, etc.) as well as some of the most conspicuous omissions, such as the fact that there is not a single selection by Dean Martin, for instance.

Bing Crosby's name is on the cover of two albums that Mr. Friedwald selected, and the two of them are one-of-a-kind collaborations: the 1957 pairing with Bob Scobey's Frisco Jazz Band released as *Bing with a Beat* (already included in *Jazz Singing* in an appendix under the heading "Don't Show Up at a Desert Island Without 'Em"), and the 1960 meeting with his lifelong friend and musical *confrère* Louis Armstrong on *Bing & Satchmo*. Mr. Friedwald had already written extensively on Crosby in some of his previous books: his entry on Bing in the *Biographical Guide* is particularly reverential, and a whole chapter of *Jazz Singing* is devoted to arguing that Mr. Satch and Mr. Cros single-handedly ushered in a new, modern type of jazz-infused pop music in the 1920s and '30s. Both of these, by the way, are essential reads in order to fully understand his critical appraisal of the two Bing albums he tackles in *The Great Jazz and Pop Vocal Albums*.

The chapter on *Bing with a Beat* highlights the fact that by the 1950s, Crosby was such an established star that he did not need to prove anything to anybody, which allowed him the freedom to do what he most enjoyed without having to think too much about its commercial viability. When describing Crosby's impact on popular music, Mr. Friedwald describes the singer's career as "quite possibly the most remarkable . . . in American music" and goes on to state that "more than any other entertainer, actor, singer, or comic, Crosby defined twentieth-century vernacular pop culture: he was pop music, and pop music was him." Yet by the time he cut *Bing with a Beat* with Scobey, he could freely indulge in his first musical love—Dixieland jazz—in the company of a fantastic band at a time when that style of jazz was experiencing a nationwide revival. If this record works so well and has enthralled so many listeners, it is precisely, Mr. Friedwald argues, because "Crosby sounds like he's singing for the sheer joy of it, with a degree of warmth and emotional involvement that exceeds everything else he recorded in his long and incredibly prolific career."



As for *Bing & Satchmo*, Mr. Friedwald sees that project as the icing on the cake of the wonderful partnership that the two men had already pursued on film and radio; it is the duet to end all duets by two personalities who were well known for collaborating often with other singers. Giving arranger Billy May his due, Mr. Friedwald praises the arrangements and the concept behind the album, which he likens to the May-produced Crosby collaboration with Rosemary Clooney on *Fancy Meeting You Here* and *That Travelin' Two-Beat*: "One thing it isn't is a couple of vocalists sitting around a rhythm section, swapping standards back and forth . . . *Bing & Satchmo* . . . sounds like an incredibly hip original cast album, or, more to the period, like the

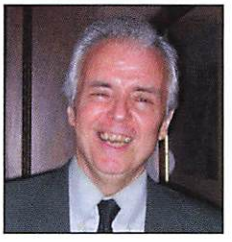
soundtrack of an elaborate TV special." It is definitely a pity that nobody ever had the idea to produce such a television show, because it probably would have become an instant classic.

This chapter also stresses the important role that Johnny Mercer played in the making of the Crosby-Armstrong project: not only did the Savannah-born songwriter contribute special-material lyrics for some of the songs (in some cases in the studio while the recordings were being made), but he also composed two new tunes for the album ("Rocky Mountain Moon" and "Little Ol' Tune") and even acted virtually as the producer of the sessions. Mr. Friedwald's insightful analysis of the tracks on the album notes the witty countermelody and lyrics written by Lew Spence and Alan and Marilyn Bergman, and praises the choice of Horace Silver's "The Preacher." Finally, the author states his approval of the album in unequivocal terms: "*Bing & Satchmo* was the culmination of the lifelong mutual admiration society between two giants of twentieth-century music. If it ever gets any better than this, I'm not sure I want to know about it."

The reading of Mr. Friedwald's new book will elicit similar warm approval. It is a book to leaf through and read intently, a book that, like all the others by this author, will make readers reflect upon their own standards of vocal jazz and pop greatness. It is a book that will have readers seek out certain albums and listen to others anew—a book that, in short, belongs on the shelf of any jazz, pop, and Bing Crosby fan.

Anton Garcia-Fernandez

Clap Your Hands Altogether Now - The Banjo's Back In Town



Martin McQuade tells us about an historic banjo.

On November 21, 2017 Bonham's Auction House in New York, in collaboration with Turner Classic Movies, held an auction entitled "Out of this World," consisting of artifacts pertaining to fantasy and science fiction films. Bonham's press video described the auction as "an amazing collection of larger than life movie memorabilia." Catherine Williamson, Bonham's Los Angeles based Director of Fine Arts, Manuscripts, and Entertainment Memorabilia, stated in the video that "we have examples of great Disney animation art from *Pinocchio* and *Snow White*...and property from the estate of Disney legend Harper Goff, who is not a household name but he should be."

During the video Goff's niece Shawn McKeever elaborated upon her uncle's legacy. *My uncle took it to a whole other level. He was art director on "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea". He designed the original Nautilus. His studio was always filled with different renderings and art and things and tubes and his original "Willy Wonka" sketches, his Firehouse Five Plus Two banjo. I'm so honored to say Harper Goff is my uncle.*

For those readers of BING magazine who might wonder why this should be of interest, my liner notes for the 2011 Universal CD *Bing in Dixieland* explain. *The Firehouse Five Plus Two popularized the raucous and frenetic style of early Dixieland anew in the late 1940s. The colorfulness of this gang could be attributed to the fact that they all worked in the animation department at Walt Disney Studios. The captain and guiding light was Ward Kimball – perhaps better known for his work on Fantasia and Dumbo than for his hot Dixieland trombone skills. The group had long been a fixture at Hollywood's Mocambo Club when Red Nichols caught them and raved to Bing about the raw, primitive excitement they generated. Between 1950 and 1953 they appeared on six Crosby radio shows. Their 'assaults' allowed Bing to take his solos within the ensemble, as he had done with the Whiteman group more than twenty years before. His enthusiasm is palpable. "When these boys break loose, storm warnings should be hoisted, livestock should be tethered, and it might be a good idea to get the women and children indoors." Three collaborations are featured here - one serving as a summit meeting as Bing and Ella Fitzgerald dispense W.C. Handy's "Memphis Blues."* (Joining Goff in the septet were clarinetist Clark Mallery, drummer Monte Mountjoy, soprano and bass saxophonist (and tuba virtuoso) Erdman "Ed" Penner, and pianist Frank Thomas)

Goff's banjo, which helped to supply propulsion to Bing's vocals on those radio broadcasts (as well as shows held during Bing's Pebble Beach Golf Tournaments) was a prime attraction at the auction, and sold for $5000. This is Bonham's description of Goff's fabled instrument and supplemental memorabilia, as well as the artist himself. *A Bacon and Day Silver Bell four-string banjo, model No. 4, circa 1920s, featuring a wooden resonator with brass parts, a large brass plaque on resonator personalized "H Goff," "Style No. 4 / B & D Silver Bell / The Bacon Banjo Co. Inc. Groton, Conn" engraved to small brass plaque on verso, manufacturer name and model number to brass armrest, mother of pearl inlay to fingerboard, with a Weather King banjo head, a rhinestone to neck's side (missing a rhinestone on opposite side) and one rhinestone on peghead, small paper labels ("C," "EF," "F,""AF,"*

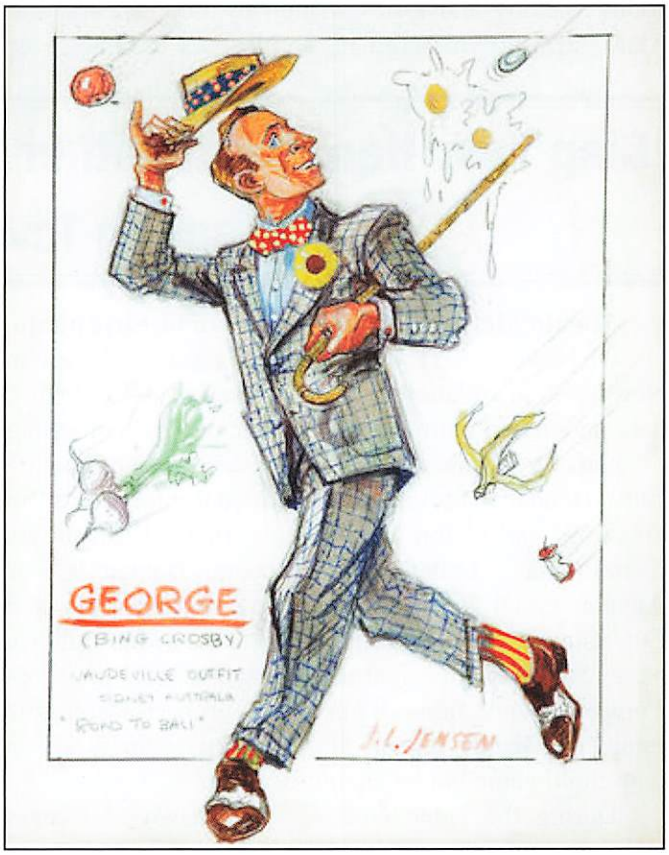
"BF") in Goff's hand taped to neck's right side, with purple velvet-lined black leather carrying case containing extra strings and maintenance equipment (screwdrivers, etc.) in inner case, with two extra banjo heads, one with approximately 38 autographs mostly in ink, housed in original transmittal package with Joseph Rogers Jr. & Son transmittal label, with a large group of "Firehouse Five Plus Two" ephemera including a scrapbook, 68 pp (15 pp are blank), a gouache on celluloid caricature of the "Firehouse Five" featuring Goff, matted (mat's backing is an original Goff magazine illustration sketch), several "Firehouse Five" LPs, a test pressing record, programs, sheet music, a poster, framed 8 x 10 in. photograph, gelatin silver print, of Goff posing with the banjo in this lot, approximately 35 black-and-white and color photos (including some duplicates), gelatin silver prints, depicting Goff, the "Firehouse Five," etc., a 4 x 5 in. negative Goff portrait photograph holding the banjo, and other related materials.

Harper Goff was a talented banjo player and a member of Walt Disney's Dixieland band, the "Firehouse Five Plus Two," which was composed mainly of prominent Disney employees like Ward Kimball. After making their national radio debut on The Bing Crosby Show in 1950, the "Firehouse Five Plus Two" performed together on The Mickey Mouse Club and other TV shows, films like Grounds for Marriage (1951) and at public events, and recorded many albums. The band also played at Disneyland on its opening day. Goff played this gorgeous vintage banjo at public events and also plays it in his cameo opposite Janet Leigh in Pete Kelly's Blues (1955). The banjo has all its major parts and appears to be in working condition. The celluloid of the "Firehouse Five" included here was likely created for the band's appearance in the Disney Goofy cartoon, How to Dance (1953). Of special interest is a banjo head that Goff collected autographs on, mainly at his performances. The many signatures on it include Bing Crosby, Ginger Rogers, "Satchmo" (Louis Armstrong—the "Firehouse Five" performed with him in Pasadena in 1954), Mack Sennett, Joseph Cotten, Benny Goodman, Vera-Ellen, Sonja Henie, Greer Garson, Hoagy Carmichael, the Andrews Sisters (Patty, Maxene, and LaVerne), Robert Taylor ("Robert" is smudged), Van Johnson, and others.

Above is a photo of Goff with his banjo, known as a Ludwig Ambassador, and a close up of the inscribed head.

Bing's passion for the guitar notwithstanding, he never lost his zeal for the unique rhythm of the banjo. Surely, "Zing Went the Strings" of Bing's heart when he affixed his name to this treasure.

Incidentally, an original study by renowned Paramount costume designer John Jensen sold for $2750 at an Entertainment auction held at Bonham's in December 2011. This was part of a lot of 10 studies mostly for Bob Hope and Bing Crosby for *Road to Bali*, all signed by the artist. *20 x 15 in.* Bonham's posted an example on its website.



An intriguing lot sold for $250 at the next Bonham's Entertainment auction held in November 2012. This is the tantalizing summary. ***A collection of Bing Crosby photographs*** *comprising a black and white photograph of him with Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys in 1928; a framed color photograph of Crosby with Bob Hope and other cast members from one of their specials; three signed photographs; mock-up of the program for that show; a still of Crosby in Here is My Heart (Paramount, 1934); and many publicity photographs of him, his wives Dixie Lee and Kathryn, and his children.* Bonham's posted 2 of these rarities on its website. Herein lies a mystery. What is the special associated with the color promotional photo, which showcases Bing, Dick Powell, Bob Hope, Fred Astaire and Hugh O'Brien in his *Wyatt Earp* garb?

My appreciation is extended to Dana Hawkes, Entertainment Arts specialist at Bonham's.

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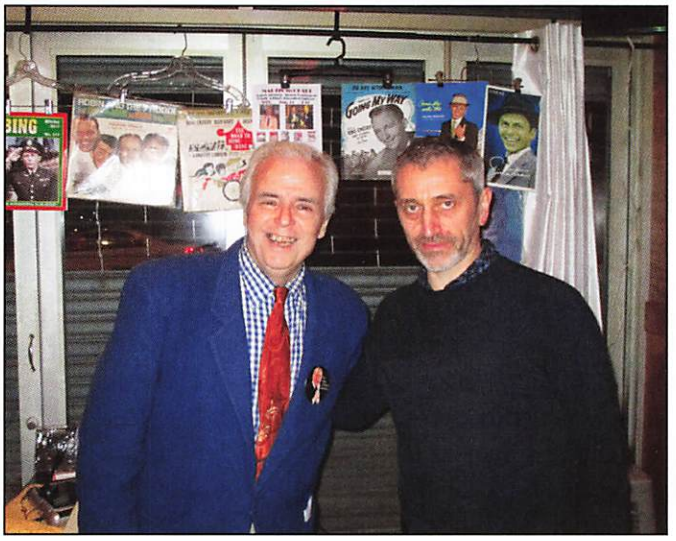
Recently it was my pleasure to honor in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn the birthdays of two composers with close associations with Bing. On January 31 at the Casa Calamari, accompanied by pianist Roman Ivanoff, yours truly performed a lion's share of Jimmy Van Heusen tunes. The show consisted of many standards that Van Heusen fashioned for Frank Sinatra. The Crosby portion emphasized *Road To* chestnuts, "It's Always You," "Moonlight Becomes You," "Road to Morocco," "Constantly," "Ain't Got a Dime to My Name," "It's Anybody's Spring," "Personality," "But Beautiful," "To See You Is to Love You," "The Merry Go Run Around," "Teamwork" and "Let's Not Be Sensible." In addition, we offered "Look to Your Heart," "Style," "Mr. Booze," "Straight Down the Middle," "If You Please," Sunday, Monday or Always," "Going My Way," "Swinging on a Star," "The Day After Forever," "Aren't You Glad You're You," "As Long As I'm Dreaming," "Country Style," "Sunshine Cake," "Sure Thing," "Just Plain Lonesome," "Got the Moon In My Pocket," "It Could Happen to You," "Like Someone in Love," "Sleigh Ride in July" and our finale, "Life Is So Peculiar." Crosbyana from my collection adorned the stage.



Martin with pianist Roman Ivanoff.

On Feb. 18, at The Gulf Coast restaurant, pianist Dan Furman furnished arrangements for a collection of Harold Arlen evergreens, including many compositions identified with Bing, including "I've Got the World on a String," "Blues in the Night," "Old Glory," "That Old Black Magic," "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive," "There's a Fella Waiting in Poughkeepsie," "Let's Take The Long Way Home," "I Promise You," "Out of This World," "June Comes Around Every Year," "Dissertation on the State of Bliss" and "The Search Is Through."

On Feb. 9, Dan joined me as we returned to the Danish Athletic Club, site of our Crosby 40th Anniversary Memorial Concert last October. Our "Valentine's Day Serenade" featured many songs which Bing recorded such as "The Day You Came Along," "My Heart Is Taking Lessons," "I Have Eyes," "Be Careful, It's My Heart," "That's How Much I Love You," "You Belong to My Heart," "Would You," "Lovely Lady," "The Folks Who Live on the Hill" and "I'll Take Romance." Several numbers which Bing crooned on radio, augmented the bill of fare. Among these, "With All My Heart," "This Heart of Mine" and "Says My Heart" particularly enchanted the lovebirds in the audience. We look forward to returning to this venerable Brooklyn venue, perhaps with another Bing-themed evening.

The December 1st, 2017 edition of *Fox and Friends* featured a snippet of Bing's recording of "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" to underscore footage of the National Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony in Washington. Co-host Brian Kilmeade commented, "America's favorite crooner, Bing Crosby - He called it."

Martin McQuade martinmcquade2002@yahoo.com

Celluloid Crosby

David Lobosco looks at one of the most famous of all Bing's films.

I know it is crazy for me to review a Christmas movie in the spring, but I had the opportunity to see 1954's *White Christmas* in a movie theater a couple of days before Christmas. I actually fulfilled one of my bucket list items by seeing a Bing Crosby movie in a theater. I had never had the pleasure of seeing one like that before. I have to admit that *White Christmas* has never been my favorite Crosby film. I thought the story was trite, and I did not care for the pairing of Bing with funny man Danny Kaye. However, upon seeing this movie in the theater, I have a completely new appreciation for the film.

The beloved classic that everyone watches during the holiday season is a lot different from what was proposed in the beginning. At first, Bing Crosby turned down the role due to the recent death of his wife Dixie Lee. However, Bing knew working on a musical with Irving Berlin tunes was destined to be a hit so he signed. Bing had co-star approval, and had wanted Fred Astaire for the role of his Army buddy. Crosby and Astaire had previously starred in *Holiday Inn* (1942) and *Blue Skies* (1946) earlier. Astaire read the script, but he then turned it down. The last movie that Astaire had made for Paramount was the 1950 disastrous musical *Let's Dance* with Betty Hutton, and by 1953 Astaire was really being choosy on what roles he was accepting at that point. Next Bing wanted to work with dancer Donald O'Connor again. Donald had played Bing's younger brother in an earlier Paramount musical *Sing You Sinners* in 1938, and Bing and Donald had worked together on radio shows since then. O'Connor was all set to be in the film, until he contracted an illness transmitted by Francis the Talking mule right before film rehearsals were set to begin. This sent Paramount scrambling, and they came up with the idea of pairing Bing with comedian Danny Kaye.

Even though Kaye was third choice for the film, he had this to say about Bing:

> "I loved to work with him. I had the feeling he was my close personal friend. The real truth is that everybody knows Bing, but no one knows him. Through the years, he has created a legendary character that is so vivid, no one knows where the

legend begins and the real Crosby leaves off. I thought I knew Bing—thought I knew all about him until we started to make *White Christmas*. Then I realized I actually didn't know the man at all. The truth of the matter is, there isn't a lazy bone in Bing's body. He works harder than any man I've met—but he does it with an easy casualness that makes him *look* lazy." (*The Danny Kaye Story* pg 198).

The movie plot, as flimsy as it may be, does have some serious overtones. By 1954, World War II had been over for almost a decade, and the film touches on what happens to soldiers after the fighting is over. Like many of Irving Berlin's movie musicals, the plot of *White Christmas* is basically a vehicle to move from song to song. Many of Berlin's standards are present like "Blue Skies", "Heat Wave", "Abraham" and of course the title song that was sung in the first minutes of the movie by Bing, and then by the group at the end. The new songs that Berlin wrote for the film were good but not up to par with the songs he was writing two decades earlier. My favorite of these new songs was the torchy number "Love You Didn't Do Right by Me" which was sung in the movie by Rosemary Clooney. Other new songs like "Snow" and "Sisters" have also become standards.

The song "Snow" was originally written for *Call Me Madam* with the title "Free," but was dropped in out-of-town tryouts. The melody and some of the words were kept, but the lyrics were changed to be more appropriate for a Christmas movie. The song "What Can You Do with a General?" was originally written for an un-produced project called *Stars on My Shoulders*.

Trudy Stevens provided the singing voice for Vera-Ellen, who did not have a suitable singing voice. It was not possible to issue an "original soundtrack album" of the film, because Decca Records controlled the soundtrack rights, and Clooney was under exclusive contract with Columbia Records. Consequently, each company issued a separate "soundtrack recording": Decca issuing *Selections from Irving Berlin's White Christmas,* while Columbia issued *Irving Berlin's White Christmas.* On the former, the song "Sisters" (as well as all of Clooney's vocal parts) was recorded by Peggy Lee, while on the latter, the song was sung by Rosemary Clooney and her own sister, Betty.

Berlin wrote "A Singer, A Dancer" for Crosby and his planned co-star Fred Astaire but when he was unavailable, Berlin re-wrote it as "A Crooner – A Comic" for Crosby and Donald O'Connor, but when O'Connor left the project so did the song. Another song written by Berlin for the film was "Sittin' in the Sun (Countin' My Money)" but because of delays in production, Berlin decided to publish it independently. Crosby and Kaye also recorded another Berlin song ("Santa Claus") for the opening WWII Christmas Eve show scene, but it was not used in the final film. Their recording of the song survives though, and the song is cute but not great.

One of the greatest moments of the film is a bit Bing and Danny Kaye do off the cuff miming to "Sisters". In one take, Bing and Danny were clowning around and Crosby's laughs are genuine and unscripted, and he was unable to hold a straight face. Although the filmmakers had a better take where Crosby didn't laugh, the version with Crosby laughing was one that they used.

I find myself always comparing *White Christmas* to *Holiday Inn,* and I think that is unfair. The movies were done a decade apart and movie musicals were much different in 1954 than 1942. I prefer *Holiday Inn*, but I have a much better appreciation for *White Christmas* now that I have seen the film in a movie theater. From the understated performance of Dean Jagger as the retired general to the superb dancing of Vera-Ellen to the banter of Crosby and Kaye, *White Christmas* is really a great film. Yes, the film is sentimental and cheesy at times. While I went to see the film in a theater my wife and kids ran errands, and I am glad. I had tears in my eyes at the end when the general was recognized and realized he was not forgotten. I think that is a sign of a great movie that a movie made more than 60 years ago can still evoke emotion in 2017. At the end of the movie screening, the audience stood up and applauded, and I smiled to myself and thought of what a great Christmas gift this film was and is. Thanks again Bing!

David Lobosco davidlobosco@yahoo.com

Trudy who?

David briefly mentioned Trudy Stevens and Richard Baker has been investigating this somewhat mysterious lady.

The practice of having a "ghost" artist voicing the songs for the less vocally endowed stars of the silver screen goes back to the earliest days of the "talkies". It was memorably portrayed in *Singin' in the Rain*, where Debbie Reynolds' character provides a voice, both

singing and speaking, for the apparent star of the film that we see being made at the transition between "silents" and "talkies" (except that Debbie Reynolds, though no vocal slouch, was actually voiced by Betty Noyes for one song, an interesting example of an additional layer of bluff). Here we were left in no doubt as to what was happening and Debbie's character ultimately received triumphant recognition for her role. In reality for most movies the audiences and record buyers, remained in the dark, with no recognition for the vocal "ghosts". Audiences believed that, for example, Rita Hayworth and Kim Novak could sing as well as act and look easy on the eye in such films as *Pal Joey*, the LP sleeve for which gives them full and equal prominence as named stars alongside Frank Sinatra, though both had vocal doubles and cannot be heard singing on the record. There is no clue from the sleeve as to who sings what song and the real singers remain anonymous and uncredited. There are many examples but I pick on *Pal Joey* with reason and will return to it.

Towards the end of last year, BING magazine joint editors Malcolm and Anton produced a podcast of a transatlantic conversation on the subject of Bing as a Christmas singer, with examples of him in action. The podcast is mounted on Anton's Jazz Flashes blog at http://jazzflashes.blogspot.com. It is good listening and I recommend a visit to the blog. The podcast is also on YouTube.

During the conversation they touched, naturally enough, on the film *White Christmas* and mentioned Trudy Stevens, who provided the singing voice for Vera-Ellen on both the soundtrack and the LP issue covering it. Anton asked Malcolm whether he knew anything about her. Malcolm admitted that he did not. This re-awoke thoughts that I first had some years ago. At that time I had wondered why an unknown singer managed to get her name emblazoned on a potentially best-selling LP coupled with three such prominent stars as Bing, Danny Kaye and Peggy Lee. The limited amount of research I managed then uncovered just the records which flowed from the film - the LP, some 45s and of course (later) the CD. Otherwise I had found nothing.

My interest was re-awakened by the podcast and with the benefit of the information now on the Internet I found Trudy Stevens on the Internet Movie Database (IMDB) which shows her uncredited participation in several films - *The Corpse Came C.O.D,* I *Walk Alone* (starring Lizabeth Scott), *Dead Reckoning* (starring Lizabeth Scott again), all of 1947, and *Dark City* of 1950 (also starring Lizabeth Scott). Oddly the mention is in a "mini-bio" for her and she does not show up in the listings for the films themselves. However she was the ghost singer for Lizabeth Scott in three of the films and in the other she is listed as "Specialty Singer (uncredited)" and is credited as singing "He's Got a Warm Kiss".

Then of course we have *White Christmas*, the only one with overt credits to Stevens in any form.

But then we have some conflict. Many sources state that Trudy **Erwin** ghosted for Kim Novak in *Pal Joey* (1957), but IMDB shows Trudy Stevens doing so. Which is correct? After 1957 Stevens vanishes from any on-line record.

Trudy Erwin appeared in many of Bing's radio shows, first as one of the Music Maids, later as a soloist in her own name, and duetted with Bing on the recordings *People Will Say We're in Love* and *Oh! What a Beautiful Mornin'*. She was also married to the long term producer of the Crosby radio (and some TV) shows, Murdo McKenzie.

A paragraph hidden away in IMDB notes that Stevens often covered Vera-Ellen's vocal needs but a trawl through Vera-Ellen's films does nothing to confirm this. Stevens and Erwin are shown on IMDB and elsewhere as working over a partly overlapping period, and in Erwin's case appearing under her own name in some films.

Then we have some references in "Variety". On 19th March 1947 a report states – "*Bob Hope - - - - Trudy Ewan, one of his Mirium singers, gets her first solo spot.*"

On August 21, 1947 Variety reported *"Dick Stabile and his vocalist, Trudy Ewan, eloped to Carson City Monday night."*

(Dick Stabile was a well-known orchestra leader who famously backed many of Dean Martin's early hits including "That's Amore".)

On September 16th, 1947 "*THE BOB HOPE SHOW - - - Starring Bob Hope, with Jerry Colonna, Vera Vague, Mirium singing group (Trudy Ewan, Leo Dukehorn, Leslie Baxter, Bernie Parke).*"

Then on 23rd October 1947 "*Trudy Stevens, wife of ork leader Dick Stabile and former Bob Hope "Mirium" girl, checks into Pine-Thomas tomorrow for a role in "Speed to Spare". (*Pine-Thomas Productions was a prolific B-picture unit of Paramount Pictures from 1940–1957).

So might Ewan be a mis-spelling of Erwin, in which case do we have both participating in the "Mirium"

singers over a similar period? Or are they all one and the same? NO and NO, because Malcolm Macfarlane, much more adept than me in digging to the greatest depths of the Internet, then discovered an item written by Ciné Karine with a supporting note by Devin Stabile, (Dick's grandson) which makes it clear that the voice in *Pal Joey* was that of Trudy Stevens and removes the confusion – "*The mistake stems from the fact that Trudy Stevens' maiden name was Ewan. So a lot of sources just assume that the name Ewan found on some studio recording logs was a typo and that it was actually Trudy Erwin, when it was actually Trudy Stevens! Trudy Erwin stopped her film and radio career in 1952 - - -Miss Stevens (bandleader Dick Stabile's wife) sang very often for Lizabeth Scott and for Vera-Ellen in White Christmas (54) and that's her whom you hear singing in Pal Joey (57) for Kim Novak.*

So IMDB is correct and we can remove Trudy Erwin from our consideration. But why does Trudy Stevens receive full credit on the record sleeve for *White Christmas* but get ignored for *Pal Joey*? *White Christmas* is a standout exception to the standard approach at the time. I will offer a suggestion as to why this might be. Rosemary Clooney could not appear on the LP as she was prevented by her contracted label, Columbia, from appearing on the rival Decca label and Peggy Lee had to be brought in as a substitute on the record to cover Clooney's film songs. With such a major star there could be no question of an unknown anonymous voice so she was credited. It surely almost automatically follows that the fourth voice had to be credited as well. I therefore think Trudy Stevens has the presence of Peggy Lee to thank for her sole specific recording credit: were that not the case we would possibly still be in ignorance of her very existence. Had Rosemary been allowed to appear the sleeve might well have shown Bing with her, Danny Kaye and Vera-Ellen with the inference that those were the voices heard. My thanks to Malcolm for pointing me to several subterranean depths of the Internet.

Richard Baker

(Editor: I found quite a few entries in Variety for Trudy Stabile from 1959 to 1962. She seems to have been quite a busy singer in Palm Springs, Lake Tahoe and Reno. Her grandson, Devin, also commented:

"My grandmother was Trudy Ewan, then Trudy Stevens, then Trudy Stabile and finally Trudy Painton. Dick Painton was a good man who loved her and passed just before she did. Both of them lived their last years in San Juan Capistrano....As a child, I had the pleasure of hearing her sing as she made family dinners. Even in her 70's, she could still calm my nerves and give me a hug that would melt your soul."

Further research indicates that a Gertrude Painton, born January 6, 1924, died on October 10, 2003 in San Juan Capistrano at the age of 79.)

The Bells of St. Mary's - A Century of Film

A Century of Film is an ongoing series where Devin Wilger watches one movie from each year between 1917 and today. For the year of 1945, it's *The Bells of St. Mary's*. This article first appeared in *Yorkton This Week* (http://www.yorktonthisweek.com) on February 22. We give our thanks to Mr. Wilger and *Yorkton This Week*.

The first minutes of *The Bells of St. Mary's* sets up a movie that is a bit more dramatic than the one we actually watch. Father O'Malley (Bing Crosby) is replacing a priest who found the nuns at St. Mary's school so difficult to deal with that it drove him to madness. Immediately, my mind went to my parents' experiences in a Catholic school, their horror stories of nuns going mad with power. The series of polite disagreements between well-meaning people that follow are not quite what you might expect. In spite of a dramatic opening, this is a film with nearly no stakes, as O'Malley deals with Sister Mary Benedict (Ingrid Bergman) a nun he generally respects and with whom he has a decent working relationship, as they navigate through a series of surprisingly low-stakes situations.

Writer/director Leo McCarey, who appeared in this space with *Duck Soup*, is not doing anything nearly as chaotic as that earlier film. The mood of the piece is the exact opposite, two hours of pleasant people being generally respectful to each other even as they disagree. There's no clouds over the film, no big drama. A crisis will develop but then dissolve as the people involved have a reasonable conversation about it and come to terms with their different positions. In between, Crosby gets to sing - Crosby was a good actor but if you've got access to that voice you had better use it - Bergman gets to sing, there are cute animals and cute children. It's two hours of nice people, which isn't really a recipe for excitement or drama.

This sounds dull, but it's actually strangely relaxing. Perhaps why this was a massive hit late in World War II, it is kind of an escapist fantasy to see reasonable people in a low-stakes situation when you're surrounded by war. It's an escapist fantasy now, the idea of respectful disagreement between reasonable, good people being almost unheard of in an era of Trump and Twitter. One dreams of a world where people can get along like Father O'Malley and Sister Mary Benedict, and everyone involved just has the best interests of the people around them in mind. It's a low-stakes antidote to a world where everything else feels high stakes.

Which is not to say that nothing happens, there are plenty of subplots going around, the biggest being the old classic of a greedy real estate developer attempting to shut down the school. Even that is handled in an unexpected way, he's never a malicious presence and the ultimate resolution of the problem is about as surprising

as it is uplifting. A young girl, faced with a difficult home life, boards at the school and struggles to deal with her mom's new relationship - that relationship is with her father who has returned to the picture, but she doesn't know that. Two boys keep getting in fights, so Sister Mary Benedict teaches the meeker boy how to stand up for himself, a scene that might not play quite as well to modern audiences but does lead to a pretty quality screenshot. A character gets a disease and there's debate about whether someone should tell them. The film is happy to stop everything to have a grade one class do a fairly irreverent take on the nativity.

It's a film about religious people that doesn't really do much with religion, apart from a joke about a kid named Luther (How did he get in here?). Sure the nuns are in their habits and the priest has his collar and there are plenty of references to God, religion and prayer, but it's all kind of vague and non-specific. They're in religious orders because it was 1945 and many schools were run by the church. There's a lot to be mined out of the life of a nun or a priest, but St. Mary's has no real interest in it. These characters exist within the context of their career and there's not much interest in their internal lives. Which is not to say there's no indication that they have one, Bergman could make a rich, layered character out of a phone book, but it's not really the priority here.

There is value in a light, gentle comedy about reasonable people being able to overcome their differences. Maybe there's more value in that now than there has ever been before. There's not really much in the way of stakes or drama in *The Bells of St. Mary's*, but there's value in a film filled with fundamentally good people.

Devin Wilger

3 good reasons why you should skip the 'Fifty Shades' trequel and see 'High Society' instead this V-Day.

Kevin Young, writing on charlestoncitypaper.com on February 9, looked ahead to Valentine's Day.

This Valentine's Day, there are options a plenty for lusty lovers, crotchety couples, and half-hearted sweethearts at one of many, many,many, many restaurants out there. For the proudly single or those looking for an easy lover, there are a fair share of bars and clubs that will gladly assist in your quest for celebration. Your local movie theater will likely have it's fair share of all the above. While many will be taking in the final chapter of the *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy, another film, *High Society*, will be playing at the Terrace for those with a taste for something of a more musical/ less chains and whippy variety.

In Charles Walters' film, an heiress, Tracy (Grace Kelly), must choose between a stuffy fiance George (John Lund), C.K. (Bing Crosby) her jazz musician ex-husband, and a nosy reporter named Mike (Frank Sinatra). For the newbies and the nostalgic, here are a few not-so-little known facts and observations about the film and it's cast:

To a degree, it's a little unfair when a snarky jagoff watches *High Society* with a cynical 2018 mindset rather than the headspace of a 1956 audience member. Still, it does feel a little weird in one scene when Tracy's mom offhandedly says something about Grace Kelly's Tracy and Bing Crosby's C.K. growing up together. That kind of comment wouldn't come off odd if it weren't for the fact that Crosby is noticeably 26 years older than Kelly. It's highly likely that the comment was referring more to their personal growth since their failed marriage together.

Dollars to diggety doughnuts that during one of the film's premieres, a couple walked out of the of the movie and the guy, possibly a 1956 hipster prototype, turned to his lady pal and said — between elongated pulls from his Chesterfield of course — "Yes, well, personally I liked it better when they called it *The Philadelphia Story* twah twah twah". Unfortunately, said fictional hipster was very right. *High Society* is a musical adaptation of *The Philadelphia Story*, originally a play and soon after, a film adaptation starring Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, and Jimmy Stewart.

While Sinatra was a big fanboy of the aforementioned Chesterfield cigarettes, his *High Society* co-star, Louis Armstrong, loved succumbing to reefer madness on a regular basis. He loved it so much that it's rumored that the devil's weed was the primary influence behind his 1928 instrumental recording, "Muggles". When talking to biographer Max Jones,

Armstrong elaborated on his other favorite pastime of smoking muggles, "We always looked at pot as a sort of medicine, a cheap drunk and with much better thoughts than one that's full of liquor." It wouldn't be too hard to envision a 21 year old J.K. Rowling puffing a muggle and writing story notes about magic-deprived people in her Trapper Keeper.

Bing sings "True Love" to Grace.

Written by Cole Porter especially for the movie, the song *True Love* was a million seller that led to Grace Kelly and Bing Crosby being given platinum records. Even more unique was that this was the only platinum record ever awarded to sitting royalty as Grace Kelly had recently become engaged to Prince Rainier of Monaco. In fact, she even wore her actual engagement ring for her character's engagement ring. Grace Kelly's last feature film before retiring from acting. It was around this time that she slightly raised both hands and decided, "Alright!!! That's it for me!" as she walked away from bright lights of Hollywood and into the even brighter lights of aristocracy.

High Society will screen at The Terrace Theatre on Feb. 14 at 7:30 p.m.

Kevin Young

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters and emails received since the last issue

Frank Startup, Cirencester, Glos. UK

I have received the latest edition of BING, and my renewal subscription is on its way to Michael. The magazine's new look is very impressive, as is the consistently interesting quality of the articles and information contained. I'm sure I am not alone in being heartily grateful that you remained as editor, and would like to thank you for all that you are doing to keep this aged, technophobic Crosby fan in the loop. I love the colour photography.

An article in BING 176 that dealt with Crosby's standing within the post-rock generation came back to me when I watched a three-part documentary series called 'Popular Voices', shown on BBC4 recently, in which Gregory Porter examined the human voice as a musical instrument. The second programme was titled 'Crooners', and was fascinating.

It was framed by clips of the Bing Crosby/David Bowie Christmas duet, and then went on, through a variety of clips, exposition and interviews – including one with Mary Crosby – to draw a direct and surprisingly credible line from Crosby in the 1920s to Bowie in the 1970s via obvious suspects such as Sinatra and Nat King Cole, and some more surprising. There were plenty of clips of Bing performing, and the whole programme recognised the pioneering part he played in the development of both the human voice on record, and the recording industry in general.

Most pleasing was the way in which younger – and some very young – modern artists spoke about him. I get intensely irritated by the anecdote suggesting that Bowie only agreed to appear with Crosby because his mother was a fan, as if Bowie were not fully aware of the stature and importance of the man he was singing with, and as if, had his mother been a fan of Des O'Connor, for example, we'd have seen Bowie on the Des O'Connor Show. One young singer named Beck - no, me neither, but I'll look him up - said that Bowie, famously a career shape-shifter through various personae over the years, was interested in Crosby because of the similarly multi-faceted aspects of his career: singer, actor, television host, radio star, etc., which struck me not only as credible, but welcome in saying that Bowie was interested in Crosby and at least knew about his achievements. I've always thought there was an element of homage in Bowie's appearance, and this is the closest I've seen to it being explicitly stated.

John Bassett, Rochford, Essex, UK

There are a number of us who are compelled to buy anything that is Bing-orientated, especially musical

items which feature his singing voice. I happen to be amongst that number and early in November it was my good fortune to be standing next to a market stall that was selling novelty Christmas goods. Much to my delight, Bing's voice was suddenly heard singing the first eight lines of "Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow" from within a 13-inch high Santa Snow Lantern. Distributed by Big Boss Imports, CM11 2UL, and priced at £10, this was something I could hardly refuse!

Some years ago I was given a copy of what must be the smallest replica of a Bing LP ever made. The sleeve of this miniature "Merry Christmas" album measures only 27mm square and the protruding record incorrectly bears a red US Columbia label, similar in appearance to the 78s, instead of the normal US Decca or UK Brunswick label which one would normally expect to find. Produced in the States by "Jacqueline's", this little disc was specially made to be placed inside a doll's house. Unfortunately, the record itself cannot be played.

In conclusion, I have a shaped picture disc in the collection which, to the best of my knowledge, has never been mentioned in contemporary discographies. It is of Danish origin and was manufactured by Allround Trading in 1984. The record is made to resemble a very rotund Santa Claus, with "White Christmas" pressed on his front and "Jingle Bells" pressed on his back. The catalogue number is pb010 and the record plays at 45rpm. At its widest point the shape measures 11.5 inches from Santa's head to foot and is printed in full colour.

I hope that my little delve into Christmas-themed novelties will inspire other members to discuss some of their own unusual items of Crosbyana.

Greg Van Beek, by email from West Bend, Wisconsin, USA

Just wanted to congratulate you on the fine use of color photos throughout the latest issue. I hope it stays as a permanent feature.

I wanted to mention to you also, in reading the *Once in a While* coverage of Glen Campbell's death, that when I met him in 2005 and chatted with him for a good 10 to 15 minutes, he spoke very highly of Bing and was thrilled to receive a DVD of the 1968 Hollywood Palace Christmas show he appeared on with Bing. Up until that time, he hadn't seen the show since it aired. He also told me he played in the Crosby Pro-Am at Pebble Beach (and subsequent AT&T) beginning in 1968 and (apparently) every year since. In February of 2006, when he once again played the Pro-Am, he told a reporter who brought up Bing's name that the DVD of the show they did together was one of his most prized possessions. It made me feel good to know that he cared so much for Bing and that such a simple gesture brought him so much pleasure.

Regarding the film *I'll Be Me*, I agree it's painful to watch, but it did serve to bring a lot of recognition to a very terrible disease that afflicts so many. It shows that regardless of fame or wealth it doesn't discriminate. My grandmother suffered from dementia, similar to Alzheimer's, so I had first-hand experience with it.

Once again, I'm pleased to see how the magazine has evolved. Who could have ever imagined from the days of mimeographed pages and hand pasted in actual photographs that Bing's fan club magazine would become as sophisticated as this...full color!

Ian Patience, Woodford Green, Essex

...I have dipped into the latest magazine and it looks full of interest as usual.

I see that Alfie Boe and Michael Ball have recorded a version of "White Christmas" on which they "harmonise" with Bing. I remember that Bryn Terfel did something similar a few years ago – not very successfully to my mind. What was interesting was that in a breakfast TV interview Alfie Boe was singing the praises of Bing and saying he hadn't realized what a great singer he was and particularly admired his phrasing which he described as "superb". Nice to hear a modern singer speaking in this vein.

As usual I will say keep up the good work for Club Crosby which is much appreciated...

Ken Shaw, Hessle, Yorkshire, UK

...I have just commenced reading No. 177 and I am always amazed and surprised at the amount of information and time taken and produced by all who do contribute and I offer a great vote of thanks to all who do so. We have undoubtedly the best Club magazine and of course this is due to the remarkable efforts of Malcolm, Anton, Wig, Michael and team. Please keep the colour if possible...

John Stiles, Pinner, Middlesex, UK

At an Antiques Fair, I purchased a 1971 reprint of *Film Pictorial* of September 30, 1933. On the inside cover is the first half of an article: - *1933: Diary of a Film Fan.* Bing gets a reference under February but nowhere else! The article continues inside the back cover month by month up to December but without further mention of Bing.

In October 1933, it is stated that out of 27,000 actors in Hollywood, 17,000 are extras and of the remainder only 326 have played walk-ons on two or more pictures in a year and only 150 can lay claim to steady employment. On that basis, Bong was fortunate to be one of the 150!

Thanks for the great news about Gary Giddins' forthcoming book.

(Editor: The February reference reads as follows: "Another catchy headline is Bing Crosby Tells What Women Want'. It is, reports Gladys Hall in capitals, 'FUN!' Bing shows her a typical fan letter: 'I want to bury my lips in the palm of your hand and kiss along

each finger to its tip. I want to kiss and kiss and kiss the dear centre of your hand until you make me stop.'"

Another who wrote about Gary Giddins book was Richard Muirhead.)

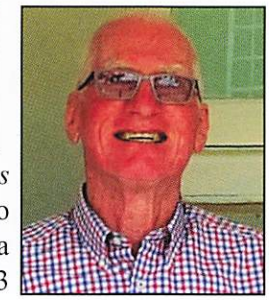
Richard Muirhead, by email from West Lothian, Scotland.

Thanks for this great news, that's Christmas 2018 taken care of. How many further volumes does he plan? He better speed up production or we'll all be pushing up the daisies before they're completed.

Have you heard of the web site: www.mediastorehouse.com, they have a few less common Bing photos which can be made up into mugs, photos, greeting cards etc. I received an excellent cushion this Christmas made up from a *Road to Utopia* poster, good quality, worth a browse.

Pleased that "Thoroughly Modern Bing" has been re-released on CD with original artwork albeit one song dropped, waiting for CD to arrive. Quality sounds excellent on Amazon Music stream. I believe this wasn't a popular album in some circles but I loved it, good big band arrangement.

A Note from Australia



Graham Pascoe joins us to offer some comments on our last issue.

The latest BING was, as usual, entertaining and informative.

Reading Joao's review of James Kaplan's book on Frank Sinatra reminded me that the so-called rivalry between Bing and Frank was 'grist for the mill' for Australian media. In 1946 listeners to Melbourne radio couldn't agree who was superior. They were writing letters on the subject to a weekly journal *Listener In* for publication in its 'Axes and Orchids 'column during the first half of 1946. After radio station 3XY broadcast a Sunday night program in which Crosby and Sinatra fans debated the merits of each singer the *Radio Times* was bombarded with letters complaining about the personal remarks made about each singer by some participants: comments on Bing's age and Frank's 'funny looks'.

By 1979 the fans were on better terms. Members of The Victorian Bing Crosby Society (now The Australian Bing Crosby Society) were advised in its newsletter *The Crosby Voice* that they could now buy a long-playing record which the local Sinatra Society produced with complete soundtracks of The *Bing Crosby Show for General Electric.* They had been broadcast in the USA in March 1954 when Frank was Bing's guest. They had not been broadcast in Australia.

Bing and Fred Astaire were a great combination in *Blue Skies* and, together with Irving Berlin's songs, it's easy to understand why it's still a favourite. Paramount's publicists were on the job before *Blue Skies* was released in Australia.

In November 1946 the music magazine *Tempo* included a photo of Bing holding an over-sized pipe, captioned 'MR BIG TAKES A SMOKE'. According to the unlikely story, someone had substituted it for his familiar pipe on the set. In the following month a new magazine *Syncopation* published a photo of Bing, Billy De Wolfe, director Stuart Heisler and Gary Cooper on the set of *Blue Skies* and another page was devoted entirely to six photos of stills from the movie. Also in December, *Music Maker's notes* on 'Coming films' featured a photo of Bing and Fred Astaire in a lengthy article about this '$3 million Paramount Technicolor musical: Bing Crosby, the world's No. 1 popular singer, naturally carries the heaviest vocal load in the movie ... The film has great charm ... Crosby breezes through the picture in his completely relaxed and infectious style. His voice is as good as ever.'

Blue Skies reached Sydney at the end of January 1947 and it was a big success with one critic and the public. The review in *The Sydney Morning Herald* rated it as 'one of the best Paramount musicals released here for many a day'. Before its run of eight weeks finished it went to Melbourne where it was shown for four weeks at the State, Australia's largest cinema (which could seat more than three thousand patrons) despite the opinion of the film critic of that city's evening newspaper *The Herald* who didn't think that Bing was up to the role of Johnny.

Measured by sales, Bing's records of songs from *Blue Skies* had mixed success, as one would expect because there were so many of them.

Although *Blue Skies* had opened in Sydney on the last day of January 1947 Australians could not buy the first Decca record of Bing's songs from the movie until March when the first of six became available. David Lobosco doesn't tell us which was his favourite song and the most successful with Australian record buyers initially was the title song. It was coupled with 'I'll See You in C-U-B-A', like the US Decca, but not released until May. The review of the disc in *Tempo* of July rated it as good average Crosby but the previous month's *Music Maker* had published a dreadful review: 'Der Bingle has seldom sounded so melancholy and mellow' on 'Blue Skies' and 'both numbers lack pace and brilliance'. Almost four thousand copies of the record were sold that year, making it Bing's fourth-top seller, and seven and a half thousand by 1954. It had to

compete with Perry Como's record of 'Blue Skies' which had been released in January, and with Dinah Shore's. The Como record sold less than six thousand by 1953. Both songs on the Crosby Decca reached the Australian charts with 'Blue Skies' going to number three.

DECCA
MADE IN AUSTRALIA FOR
COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE (AUST.) PTY. LTD. SYDNEY. N.S.W.
BLUE SKIES
(As Featured in Paramount Film "Blue Skies")
(Berlin)
(Speed 78)
BING CROSBY, Vocal
With Orchestra and Choir
Under the direction of John Scott Trotter
(L4230)
Y6019
J. ALBERT & SON (AUST.) PTY. LTD.
ROYALTY
* COPYRIGHT RECORD — ALL RIGHTS OF THE MANUFACTURER AND THE OWNER OF THE RECORDED WORK RESERVED *
UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE, BROADCASTING AND COPYING OF THIS RECORD PROHIBITED

Over the years Australians bought more copies of another May release with Bing's 'You Keep Coming Back Like a Song' with 'I've Got My Captain Working for Me Now' than the disc with 'Blue Skies'. *Tempo*'s reviewer thought that 'Bing is at his brightest and best' on 'Captain' but the reviewer in *Syncopation* preferred the other side and 'the beautiful background work' of John Scott Trotter and his Orchestra and 'those beautiful low notes that Crosby doesn't quite get'. It remained in the catalogue until 1955 with sales of 8598. In Australia both songs were chart hits for Bing and Dinah Shore and reached the number one position.

The first of Bing's records from the movie was released in March. Irving Berlin's 'All by Myself' was coupled with Cole Porter's 'Just One of Those Things (which Bing had recorded in January 1945). 'This is not the voice of Bing Crosby of "White Christmas" form but of an old man who just doesn't sing ... the vocal is too weak', wrote Barton Jeffreys in *Syncopation.* Tom Sterne in *Music Maker* had a different opinion, suggesting that Bing sang 'All by Myself" 'in his usual style, straight melody and clear diction'. The disc remained in the catalogue until 1951 with sales of just over four thousand.

About the same number of the disc with 'Everybody Step' and 'Serenade to an Old-fashioned Girl' were sold. The least successful of the *Blue Skies* records was 'A Couple of Song and Dance Men' with Fred Astaire's 'Puttin' on the Ritz'. That was a very rare example of an Australian Decca 78 with Bing on one side only.

By way of comparison, the biggest-selling Australian Decca of Bing's from 1947 was 'McNamara's Band' and 'Dear Old Donegal' (both recorded in December 1945) which sold almost thirty thousand records to 1955.

From one of David Lobosco's favourite Crosby films to one of our editor's least favourites, *Man on Fire,* one might wonder how Australians responded to the latter.

John McElwee's blog saw some similarity between Bing and Elvis Presley and coincidentally Elvis's first film *Love Me Tender* was screening in Sydney when *Man on Fire* started at the harbour city in August 1957. It was already showing in Melbourne where *The Herald's* reviewer had described it as having a 'weepy script' but rated it favourably. 'Bing copes with the dramatics ably', he said. *The Sun-Herald* in Sydney was unequivocal and included a photo of Bing and Malcolm Brodrick (who played his son) with its review: ' Several episodes of soap-opera thinking, including the finish, do not prevent this drama ... from achieving considerable force and distinction ... The degree of bitterness that Crosby gives to this role and the speed and pungency of his dialogue are quite astonishing ... he still knows how to keep the warm sympathy of his audience.'

Man on Fire ran for only two weeks in each city, just a fraction of the runs of Bing's previous dramatic film *The Country Girl.*

When *Anything Goes* came to Australia in April 1936 the Australian film industry, at least the distribution sector, was shaking off the effects of the Depression. Some cinemas, especially in the suburbs, were being modernised and more new cinemas were being built. Bing's acting in his previous movies had often been disparaged. How would his latest offering be received? Sydney's Prince Edward Theatre, known as 'the theatre beautiful', screened it for two weeks. Earlier in the year the stage show of *Anything Goes* had been presented in Sydney starring Harry Langdon and later in Melbourne.

Bing's performance as the stockbroker Billy Crocker won over some critics. *The Sydney Morning Herald* told its readers 'Bing Crosby plays the leading role and plays it very efficiently ... he reveals flashes of genuine talent as a light comedian'. Another Sydney paper *The Sunday Sun and Guardian* told its readers that they should enjoy the show and noted 'All the efforts of the cameramen ... have been concentrated on disguising Bing Crosby's physical corporation ... Bing looks quite athletic'. By contrast, the magazine *The Australian Women's Weekly* assessed the film as 'a one-star picture'.

Two Decca records with songs from *Anything Goes* went on sale the month after the film opened. Neither was particularly successful. 'My Heart and I' with 'Moonburn' was out of the catalogue by 1942. 'Sailor Beware' was backed by 'The Very Thought of You', the Ray Noble song which Bing had recorded almost two years previously, sold only five hundred copies in 1936

and lasted until 1949.

Before finishing with *Anything Goes* I must refer to some intriguing information which readers of *The Sydney Morning Herald* learned in February 1936. Bing had made himself unpopular with other cast members during the filming. Why? He was learning to play the bagpipes, it told it readers, because a bagpipe band is featured in one scene. I don't recall seeing such a scene. Do you?

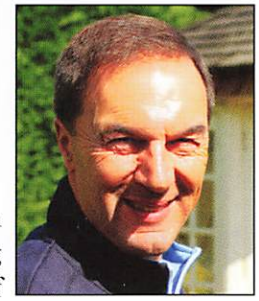
John Newton's notes on Bing's 1932 recording of 'St Louis Blues' with Duke Ellington's orchestra set me thinking of its release in Australia. Even before the record was made Brunswick (Australia) had gone out of business, a victim of the Depression. Not until 1939 could Australians buy it backed with Ellington's 'Creole Love Call', on the Columbia label. It remained in the catalogue until 1948 with total sales just over five thousand. In the early 1950s there was a renewed interest in Bing's old recordings and that was one of several reissues and it sold another 710 discs in 1953 and 1954.

Another example of Australians having a long wait before they could buy one of Bing's records is the LP *A Time to Be Jolly* about which Anton's informative contribution to *BING* in winter 2017 was a pleasure to read. It was released here on the Festival label but not until 1978. It was one of fifty Crosby LPs listed in *The Australian Music Sales* catalogue of September 1979. In November 1980, *The Crosby Voice* (the journal of The Victorian Bing Crosby Society) advised readers that it had been reissued as *A Christmas Toast*, as it had been in USA.

Graham Pascoe gpascoe34@bigpond.com

CROSBYANA

Ken Crossland has been thinking about "crooners".



As I sat down to prepare this column in mid-February, one of the sadder news items of the week was the passing of Vic Damone at the age of 89. My mind immediately went back to two wonderful evenings at the Royal Concert Hall in Nottingham in the early 1980s, when my wife and I saw Vic in concert. He was superb but sadly, he never toured England again.

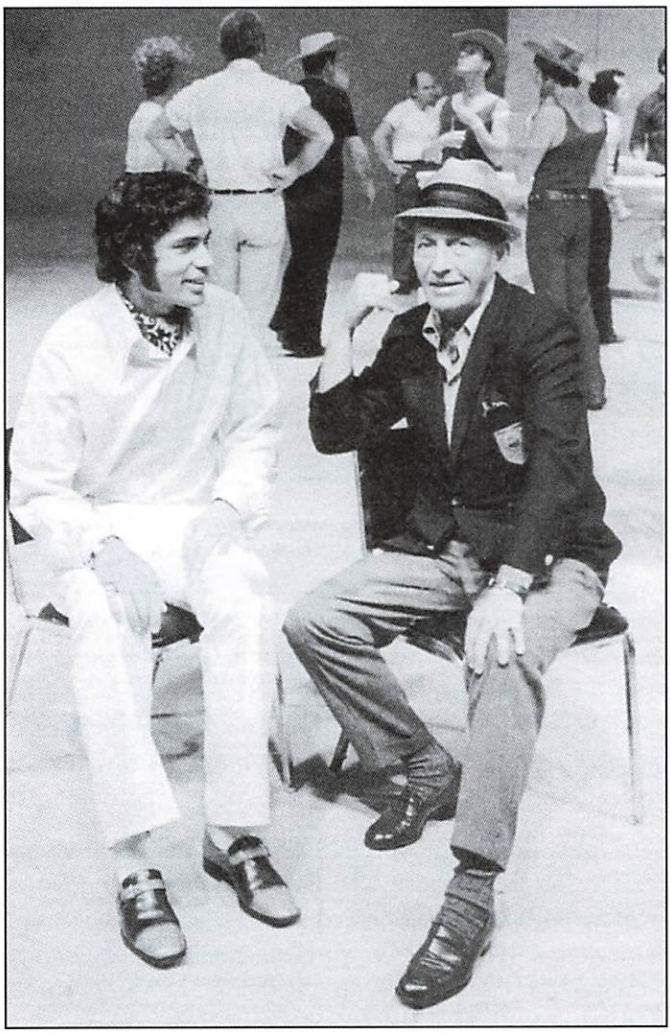
Two things struck me, reading the news items about him. One was his age - 89 - the same number at which one of Damone's great influences, Perry Como, passed away. The thought went through my mind that we Crosbyphiles seem to have been short changed. Tony Bennett is still performing into his 90s, Damone and Como hit 89; even Sinatra, despite a life seriously lived in the fast lane, made it to 82, yet we lost Bing at 74. The good news, if you will allow me that phrase, is that Bing did at least go out at the top. All of the others lived long enough to keep performing well past their sell-by date.

The other thing that struck me about the news coverage of Vic Damone's death was that he was described in almost every account as an "American crooner". The "American" part is indisputable, although Italy might have had a shout, but "crooner" is to my mind, more controversial. I have always had a definition of crooning in my head that has notes being formed in the back of the throat, resulting in a somewhat guttural sounding result, with elements of indistinction about the vocal product. Certainly some of the early Crosby recordings exhibit that - deliberately so - but for the likes of Sinatra, Bennett and Vic Damone, I had always thought of them as descendants of the Italian *bel canto* style of singing, and quite definitely not "crooners".

Not however, if you follow the logic of Gregory Porter. Porter, for those who do not recognise the name (which until last year included me) is a singer who wears a funny hat. There is more to him than that of course, although opinions vary as to whether he is a jazz, blues, soul or pop singer - or perish the thought, whether he might even be a "crooner". Do not misunderstand me. I like Porter, particularly having enjoyed a three-part series that was shown on BBC television just before Christmas, where Porter delved into three particular attributes of popular singers - and did so in a way that was both thoughtful and innovative. The second of his three programmes took "crooning" as its theme, and indeed had Bing as it central figure. The programme was as good a representation of the significance of Bing to the evolution of popular singing as any I have seen in

many a long year, and started - and finished - with Bing's collaboration with David Bowie. Porter presented this as a representation of just how "crooning" had evolved over the two generations that separated the 1977 Christmas duettists.

And therein lies the problem - to which I hasten to add I have no answer, except to say that there ought to be an answer. It is that here in 2018, just about any solo performer - mainly male but not in this age of gender equality, exclusively so - who sings anything that is not hard rock, can be described as a "crooner". Bowie must stretch it somewhat, but in Porter's programme, any solo vocalist from Bing to Frank, even the venerable Engelbert Humperdinck (who spoke fondly of his experience of working with Bing) was undeniably cast. So if you take that logic, then Vic Damone, is a shoo-in.

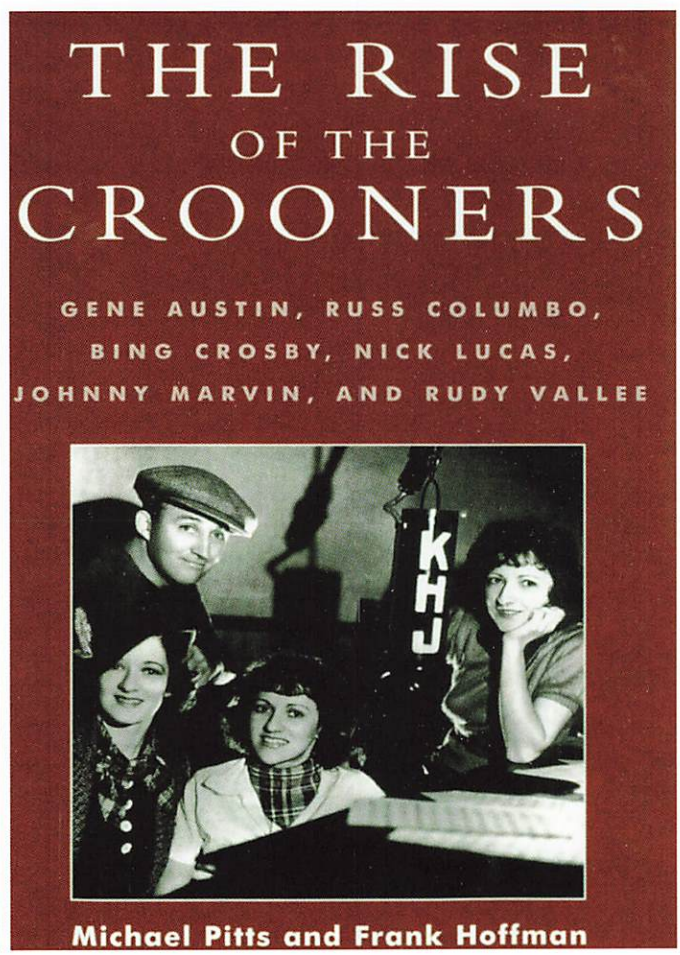


Engelbert with Bing on a Hollywood Palace show.

It set me pondering about just where "crooning", as applied to a style of popular singing, actually came from. It seems that it was first used that way in the 1920s, when the advent of radio and the microphone opened the way for massive technological and stylistic changes. Until then, whether you were Jolson or Gigli, singing was all about "projection" - in other words, the ability to be heard in the back row of the upper circle, without any amplification aids.

Yet "crooning" goes back a long way before that. When Sam Young and Joe Lewis penned their 1918 lyric for "Rock-a-Bye Your Baby (with a Dixie Melody)" they included the line that says, "when you croon, croon a tune, from the heart of Dixie". It goes back further still - way further, in fact. Look up the word "croon" in any on-line dictionary and you will discover that its roots go back to the Middle Dutch language of the 14th century and the word "cronen", meaning to groan. Its derivation into the English language is then largely attributed to the Scottish poet, Robert Burns.

For 400 years or so, the word did service to express the sentiment of a mother humming or speaking softly to her infant; of gentle night-time serenading, again perhaps with the idea of inducing a baby to sleep. It was only when technology caught up in the 1920s, that the concept of "crooning" in the act of a stage performance became possible. Remarkably, its use then to describe singers such as Gene Austin, 'Whispering' Jack Smith, Rudy Vallee and ultimately Bing, was not intended to be a compliment. "Crooning", with its deep-throated, seductive language, was seen by many as a threat to the social order, whilst the then older generations, brought up on classical and operatic styles, regarded the new breed of Twenties singers with contempt and disdain. How strange then that a term that was intended to one of abuse should turn out to be so durable and evolvable.



There's an interesting book that goes back a few years, but is well worth reading. Its title is "The Rise of the Crooners" by Michael Pitts and Frank Hoffman. One of the authors' points that hit home most strongly with me was that all the Twenties crooners had peculiarities about them, whether that be Rudy Vallee's megaphone or Jack Smith's "murmurings" that gave him his nickname. Bing's, of course, was the infamous "boo-boo-boo", heard most strongly perhaps in the 1931 recording of "Just One More Chance". What Pitts and Hoffman then bring out however is that, as the decade progressed, Bing escaped the stylistic confines that went with the stricter definition of "crooning", such that by the outbreak of World War 2, he had become what Gary Giddins called "everyman". Pitts and Hoffman put it a differently, but their point is the same. "Crosby, like an alchemist, transformed his songs into easy-listening. Wherever you were, you could be sure that, like a McDonalds in Moscow, the fare would be normal and standard in tone". And one consequence of that was that by 1940, all of the eccentricities exhibited by the Twenties crooners were already extinct.

Bing by then had become "the Groaner" (back to the Dutch), soon to become an "old Groaner". Unwittingly, he seems to have taken the word "crooning" along with him, freeing it from the quirkinesses of the Twenties singers and carrying it like a torch for the balladeers who followed in his wake. And in so doing, he opened the door for its attachment to seemingly anyone - from Humperdinck, Damone and yes, even David Bowie. How strange that the music business has never been able to come up with a better term that captures the art form of a popular singer, delivering words and melody, to tell a story, express an emotion or capture a mood. It is a textured and sophisticated art form, ill-served by a term of abuse to describe it. And if its correct that Bing was the vehicle by which the word travelled from the Roaring Twenties on a journey through the 20th century and beyond, how strange too that the image and memory of the man has faded so much, when the term so closely associated with him has proved to be so durable.

Ken Crossland ken54@blueyonder.co.uk

BING ON THE BOX

Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

TV highlights - USA & Canada

Bing's films and other items seen on TV since our last issue was prepared were:

Angels in the Outfield	INSP
Bing Crosby & the Sounds of Christmas	INSP
Bing Crosby & the Sounds of Christmas	getTV
High Society	TCM
Holiday Inn	TCM
Rhythm on the Range	StarzEncore
Road to Morocco	TCM
Robin & the 7 Hoods	TCM
Stagecoach	STZEN
The Bells of St. Mary's	TCM
White Christmas (multiple showings)	AMC

***American Masters: This Is Bob Hope*,** shown on Friday, Dec. 29, 9/8c, PBS

Dick Cavett and Conan O'Brien were among those saluting the late, great Bob Hope in *American Masters: This Is Bob Hope*, described in the publicity as a rollicking yet achingly candid documentary with two big goals—to acknowledge Hope's groundbreaking career and to make sure he's not forgotten.

The publicity continued:

> "Dad had a huge influence on 20th-century comedy, yet for so many people today, it's 'Bob who?'" said Hope's daughter, TV producer Linda Hope. "There's no burning passion to know his great work. Hopefully, *American Masters* will change that." The film tracks Hope from his vaudeville and radio days—when he was the first to do rapid-fire, politically charged stand-up routines, a style still in vogue today—to his many decades as a Hollywood icon and entertainer of wartime troops.

Bob and Bing sing "Hoot Mon" in *Road to Bali*.

But this is no puff piece: Hope's notorious philandering, deep-rooted insecurities and addiction to adulation are all addressed, providing rare insight into a legend who refused to let down his guard—

publicly or privately. "Only once did I see my dad truly shaken and fighting to keep control of his emotions," says Linda. "That was the day his longtime friend Bing Crosby died."

USA & Canadian Radio

Crosby Internet Radio
Crosby Internet Radio has continued to broadcast 24/7. They have repeated the shows broadcast in 2016 with the addition of many of Arne Fogel's excellent "Bing Shift" programs. After Thanksgiving, priority was given to Bing's Christmas shows plus tracks from the new CDs ("New Tricks" and "Among My Souvenirs") and then the broadcast returned to the original format. The shows change on a monthly basis with the 15-minute 1954-56 show typically running throughout the day with other programs such as the KMH, Philco, Chesterfield and GE shows being interleaved every hour or so. The Crosby-Clooney shows are used frequently too.

Other USA shows
Arne Fogel's weekly radio program "The Bing Shift" is on Sundays at 8 p.m. (CST) on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota. It can now be accessed on demand at http://www.jazz88.fm/on-demand/ and it's always enjoyable with an eclectic selection. For the playlists go to:
http://spinitron.com/radio/playlist.php?station=kbem&sv=l&showid=66

As an example, here's the playlist for his February 11 broadcast.

"Yes Sir! That's My Baby" - "My Buddy" - "I've Got the Girl" - "Carolina in the Morning" - "Because My Baby Don't Mean 'Maybe' Now" - "Makin' Whoopee" - "Malaguena (At the Crossroads) / Andalucia (The Breeze and I)" (mono mix) - "Gentle on My Mind" - "I May Be Wrong [radio transcription]" - "Hasta Manana" - "Blue Hawaii-A" - "At the Flying 'W'" - "The Day You Came Along" - "My Heart Is a Hobo" - "Beautiful Dreamer/The Last Rose of Summer" - "I've Got Five Dollars".

Jack Boyle's BING *for the SEASONS* show from Hudson Valley in New York State has had a different theme each month. November brought us a superb Thanksgiving Special with Bing singing "I've Got Plenty to Be Thankful For", "Thanks for the Memory", "Y'All Come", "The Music of Home" and "Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep" amongst many others. Jack's Christmas show in December featured many of Bing's seasonal favorites including "When a Child Is Born" and "The Secret of Christmas" plus three tracks by Phil Crosby Jr. Jack started the New Year with "Crosby Covers Classic Hits" which included "Puttin' on the Ritz", "Shine", "The Banjo's Back in Town", and "I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm". February's theme was "Songs from the Heart" and Jack used songs such as "Be Careful. It's My Heart", "No Other Love", "The Way We Were" and "My Funny Valentine" to illustrate his subject.

The program airs twice monthly, the first Sunday of the month at 7 pm, with an Encore Presentation on the third Sunday of the month at 9 am ET on Hudson Valley Public Radio's JAZZ FM (and on the Internet at HVPR.ORG).

Greg Van Beek's weekly radio series Nostalgia Radio Time on 1420 AM WJUB has continued its long run on Saturday nights starting at 9 pm (CST) / 10 pm (ET). Greg always has a "Bing Sings" segment in the hour-long program. His 16th annual *Bing Crosby Christmas Special* was broadcast on December 23 and we heard an hour of beloved yuletide songs by the voice of Christmas himself. Greg included many of the old favorites buttressed by newer songs like "The Song of Christmas", "When a Child Is Born", "How Lovely Is Christmas" and "On the Very First Day of the Year". He also played a rare version of "The Bells of St. Mary's" from a 1949 radio broadcast for Catholic Charities which then led into a Christmas Carolers sketch with Bob Hope from Hope's radio broadcast of December 26, 1950.

You can catch Greg online at the www.1420thebreeze.com site or you can listen to the previous two weeks shows on Greg's podcast at nostalgiaradiotime.podomatic.com.

The **Star Spangled Radio Hour** can still be heard at http://www.cruisin1430.com/media/podcast/star-spangled-radio-hour and Bing pops up now and then. In November, they broadcast the KMH show from November 23, 1944. There was a double dose of Crosby on December 23 with the KMH show of December 24, 1942 followed by the *Command Performance* broadcast of the same date.

WDCB radio in Chicago has a long-running radio program called *Those Were the Days*. The program has played a prominent role in Chicago's radio history for more than 35 years. Drawing from a vast library of material each Saturday, Steve Darnall presents old-time radio classics and music. On December 23, Greg Van Beek caught a "Soldiers with Wings" broadcast originally heard on December 26, 1942 with Bing as guest. The groaner sang four songs: "Brahms' Lullaby"; "White Christmas"; "Silent Night"; and, much to Greg's delight, an early version of "Winter Wonderland".

TV highlights - UK

Crosby items seen since our last issue was prepared were:

Happy Holidays from Bing and Frank	Sky Arts
The Country Girl	Sky Valentine
The Legendary Bing Crosby	Sky Arts
White Christmas	Sky Christmas

In our *Letters* section, Frank Startup mentioned that the singer Gregory Porter has been exploring the background to popular voices in a 3-part series called

Gregory Porter's Popular Voices and on November 24 part 2 "Crooners & Co" looked at the soft, intimate art of crooning. Ken Crossland has also discussed this series in his *Crosbyana* section. The publicity stated: "Born with the arrival of the microphone in the 1930s, crooning was initially about men seducing women and thrived through signature stars such as Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra. However, far from disappearing with the advent of rock 'n' roll, the art of crooning gained a new existential edge and was transformed by the likes of Roy Orbison, David Bowie and even Lana Del Rey into a haunting and abiding strain of contemporary pop. Contributors include Iggy Pop, Joshua Homme, George Benson and Beck."

The programme opened with a clip of our man greeting David Bowie at the front door in his 1997 TV special. Bing was prominently featured for the next 15 minutes and film extracts from *Blue of the Night* and *Swingtime with the Stars* were used as Porter discussed Bing's vocal prowess. We even saw an extract from the 1932 cartoon *Crosby, Columbo and Vallee*. The Crosby version of "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime" was played to illustrate the harsh times of the Depression. A brief interview with Mary Crosby gave Mary the chance to point out that her Dad was one of only four singers to sell one billion units — the others being Elvis, The Beatles and Michael Jackson. Porter said that Bing set the standards for other to follow and he then moved on to look at Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra and others finishing with David Bowie which led into...the Bing 'n' Bowie' duet!

Following immediately after this was a programme titled ***Crooners at the BBC*** and after watching Sammy Davis Jr, Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra in work they had done for the BBC, Bing appeared singing "That's What Life Is All About" from his 1975 appearance on the Vera Lynn Show. Excellent quality and it was great to see this superb performance by the maestro. I am embarrassed to say that I had never heard of many of the remaining singers shown!

The **BBC Breakfast show** on November 22 had an interview with Sir Michael Parkinson talking about a 3CD set "Our Kind of Music" he is promoting, plus a talk tour of his own. The show majored on his duet of "The Pleasure of Your Company" with Bing and brief extracts were shown. Parkinson spoke very warmly at some length about Bing.

Eastenders, the popular soap, used "It's Beginning to Look Like Christmas" on its November 27 episode and "I'll Be Home for Christmas" on the December 11 programme. The BBC **Children in Need** appeal played "A Marshmallow World" during the show. On December 23, Len Goodman in his **Partners in Rhyme** show on BBC 1 played a few bars of Bing's "When the Red, Red Robin Comes Bob, Bob, Bobbin' Along".

UK radio

Bing Crosby Meets

On December 23, BBC Radio 4 Extra repeated a programme from December 2001 in which Ken Barnes explored how a beloved singer became king of radio, hosting over 4000 broadcasts on American networks. Bert Bishop had reviewed the programme in BING #130 (spring 2002) and I can't do any better than reproduce Bert's comments.

> "When radio was King. . . . and when Bing was King of Radio. This sobriquet from Radio 4's Archive Hour edition "Bing Crosby Meets . . ." was bestowed by Ken Barnes who, with Gary Giddins, presented the best programme I've ever heard on the Crosby years of the pre-tv era. It's a remarkable revelation that, at his peak, Bing's audience was no less than fifty million listeners, representing one in four Americans tuning in to his weekly show for Kraft. Surely, this will remain an all-time, unbeatable record. The sixty minute programme covered just about every aspect of those great days of wireless entertainment from the Cocoanut Grove through to his final years with Rosemary Clooney and Buddy Cole in the mid-1950s.
>
> Excerpts from some sixteen songs were featured, along with guests as diverse as Zasu Pitts, Groucho Marx, Peggy Lee and Judy Garland. Much was made of Bing's support and promotion of black performers with such obvious names as Satchmo, Ella and the Mills Brothers being featured along with the all-black group The Charioteers who, for a long time, were regulars on his show. 'A charming, sociable, amiable guy' said Ken Barnes of Bing, who in 1949 was voted by the American public to be the most admired man in the world concluded Gary Giddins, whose detailed and deeply researched biography of Bing must make him the most knowledgeable man, ever, on the life and times of The Old Groaner. Though one or two of our members may give me an argument on that one!
>
> Not only the voice, but also the wit and humour of Bing's intimacy with the studio microphone, though not always an audience, was encapsulated in this enlightening, entertaining and inspired programme. Much credit is due to everyone concerned in its presentation and production. The producer was Caroline Barbour from BBC Radio in Glasgow and both Ken Barnes and Malcolm Macfarlane played major parts behind the scenes."

The National Presenters

Songs played on the BBC national networks of which we were aware over the last four months were:

Clare Teal: Fancy Meeting You Here (Nov. 12) - Little Jack Frost Get Lost (Dec. 17) – Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive (Jan. 29)

Chris Evans Breakfast Show: Mele Kalikimaka

(Dec. 19) – Don't Fence Me In (Feb. 13)

Elaine Paige on Sunday: Jingle Bells (Dec. 17) – Well, Did You Evah (Feb. 18)

Don Black: Moonlight Becomes You (Jan. 21)

Paul O'Grady: Put It There Pal (Jan. 21) – Dinah (Jan. 28)

Steve Wright's Sunday Love Songs: White Christmas (Dec. 17)

Liza Tarbuck: It's Beginning to Look like Christmas (Dec. 23)

Pick of the Pops: Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 30)

Sounds of the 60s: Hey Jude (Nov. 11)

Radio One Breakfast Show with Nick Grimshaw: White Christmas (Dec. 19)

The 8th with Charlie Sloth: (Radio1 Extra): White Christmas (Dec. 25)

Phil Taggart: (Radio 1) – Winter Wonderland (Dec. 24)

Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert: Where My Caravan Has Rested (Jan. 11)

Chris Hawkins (BBC Radio6): Swinging on a Star (Aug. 28) and (Jan. 29). On December 17, Chris presented "A Brief History of Christmas Songs", telling the stories behind a selection of the greatest Christmas songs of all time. Naturally, Bing was present was played and we heard him describing the first time Irving Berlin played 'White Christmas' to him. Berlin described it as "a nice little song, an amusing little number" and according to Andy Williams, "When Bing heard it for the first time, he took his pipe out of his mouth and said to Irving Berlin, this one you don't have to worry about". "Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy" was also included in the programme.

Lauren Laverne: (Radio6) – Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer (Dec. 20)

Cerys Matthews: (Radio6) – Johnny Appleseed (Jan. 14)

The local radio presenters

BBC Radio Lincolnshire's **Howard Leader** has a programme of big band swing and balladeers which goes out each Sunday afternoon and Bing is featured regularly. On November 12, there was a major feature by Howard using the "Rare Original Survivors" CD which the ICC put together some years ago to celebrate our 75th anniversary and which Stan White had passed to Howard for radio use. Many tracks from those 1935 and 1936 broadcasts were played and appropriately linked by Howard. This was a superb demonstration of the Crosby voice of the mid-1930s and it will surely have been a revelation to many listeners. I wrote to Howard to thank him and he duly read out my email on the air.

Howard is obviously becoming quite a Crosby fan and apart from playing another 18 songs by our man in the 4-month period, he also gave a fair bit of publicity to our magazine by reading extracts from Martin McQuade's article about Vietnam in BING #177.

The Late Paul Barnes, the big band, jazz, two-hour show hosted by Paul over seven BBC local radio stations and on the Internet starting at 11 p.m. on Saturday nights fits in Bing tracks which are appropriate to the theme of his show. Paul makes a point of playing a number of Bing tracks on his first programme of each month using an old ICC calendar as his inspiration. This formula produced a total of 16 Crosby classics varying from "Let's Do It" to "A Gal in Calico" and "What Am I Gonna Do About You".

John Lipscombe at BBC Radio Cumbria on his Saturday Late Show played 13 Crosby tracks in the period under review. They varied from "You're Getting to Be a Habit with Me" to "Among My Souvenirs" and "Do You Hear What I Hear".

Gerald Jackson continues to use his two programmes on local radio - "Unforgettable" on Radio Lancashire on Sunday afternoons at 4 p.m. and the other, the similarly named "Gerald Jackson: Unforgettable" on Radio Manchester on Sunday nights at 10pm to play plenty of Bing. The 11 tracks heard varied from "If You Were the Only Girl in the World" to "The Secret of Christmas" and "Children".

Bill Rennells ***Harmony Night*** show on BBC local radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet is another presenter who is very happy to play Bing in response to requests. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of Ian Lawrence and Stan White, requests have been dropping off in recent months but Bill still played nine Crosby tracks in the 4-month period. He also discussed the winter edition of BING (which had been sent to him by Stan White) in one of his programmes.

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I have listed all the other Crosby songs shown on the BBC website as having been played in the last four

months to demonstrate the impact of Christmas on the use of Bing's recordings. As you will see, "Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy" is frequently played. Not all the presenters use the site though. Most of these shows have a "listen again" facility. In future I shall only list shows where a reasonable number of Bing tracks have been played.

Beverley Humphreys presents *Beverley's World of Music*: (BBC Radio Wales) – Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep (Nov. 12) - I'll See You in My Dreams (Nov. 19) – Mountain Greenery (Dec. 3) – Swinging on a Star (Dec. 17) - Sleigh Ride (Dec. 24) – It's Been a Long, Long Time (Dec. 24) – Love Walked In (Jan. 28)
Unforgettable with Bob Roberts: (BBC Surrey) – A Crosby Christmas (Dec. 17) – There's Nothing I Haven't Sung About (Dec. 31) – Ol' Man River (Jan. 21)
Chris Needs: (BBC Radio Wales) – It's Been a Long, Long Time (Nov. 20) – Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 1) – White Christmas (Dec. 21)
David Allen: (BBC Radio Surrey) – It's Beginning to Look Like Christmas (Dec. 16) – You're All I Want for Christmas (Dec. 23) – That's What Life Is All About (Dec. 30) & (Jan. 27) – True Love (Feb. 3)
Vicki Blight: (Radio Wales) - Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 23)
Claire Cavanagh: (Radio Somerset) – Swinging on a Star (Feb. 1)
Dan Chisholm: (Radio Somerset) - Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 11)
Alan Clifford: (Radio Nottingham) - Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 18)
Mark Crossley: (Radio Manchester) - Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 18)
Get It On...with Bryan Burnett: (Radio Scotland) – Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (Dec. 21) – Jingle Bells (Dec. 27)
Jo Davies: (Radio Nottingham) – White Christmas (with Alfie Boe & Michael Ball) (Dec. 10)
Robert Elms: (Radio London) – Don't Fence Me In (Nov. 3)
Wynne Evans: (BBC Radio Wales) – White Christmas (Dec. 4).
Feasgar: (BBC Radio Nan Gaidheal) – Do You Hear What I Hear? (Dec. 21)
Jo Good and Simon Lederman (Radio London) – Little Sir Echo (Nov. 11)
Gerry Kelly: (Radio Ulster) – Mele Kalikimaka (Dec. 15)
Life's a Pitch: (Radio Suffolk) – Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 26)
Kath Melandri: (BBC Essex) – Brother, Can You Spare a Dime (Feb. 24)
Mark Murphy: (Radio Suffolk) – Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 5)
Money for Nothing: (Radio Wales) - White Christmas (Dec. 16)
Owen Money's Solid Gold Sunday: (Radio Wales) - Mele Kalikimaka (Dec. 24)
Simon Parkin: (Radio Somerset) – White Christmas (with Michael Buble) (Dec. 15) – We Wish You the Merriest (Dec. 19)
Graham Pass: (BBC Wiltshire) – White Christmas (Dec. 24)
My London: (Radio London) – True Love (Dec. 9)
Neil Foster: (BBC Radio York) – Happy Holiday (Dec. 24) - White Christmas (Dec. 24) - Mele Kalikimaka (Dec. 25) - Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 25) – We Wish You the Merriest (Dec. 25) – Well Did You Evah (Dec. 31) & (Feb. 4)
Roy Noble: (BBC Radio Wales) – True Love (Nov. 12) – White Christmas (Dec. 10) – Round and Round the Christmas Tree (Dec. 17) – Love Won't Let Us Get Away (Jan. 21)
Michael Poulter: (BBC Tees) – Sentimental Music (Dec. 10) – When My Baby Smiles at Me (Jan. 7) – Play a Simple Melody (Jan. 14) – Let a Smile Be Your Umbrella (Jan. 21) – I Can't Begin to Tell You (Feb. 4) and (Feb. 18) – The Best Things in Life Are Free (Feb. 25)
Nick Risby: (Radio Essex) – Winter Wonderland (Dec. 19) - True Love (Dec. 21) – Busy Doing Nothing (Feb. 26)
Paul Robey: (Radio Nottingham) – True Love (Feb. 11)
Grant Stott's Vinyl Collective: (Radio Scotland) – Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town (Dec. 24)
Saturday Club with John Bennett: (Radio Ulster) – Your Socks Don't Match (Jan. 6)
Sunday Club with John Bennett: (Radio Ulster) – The Whiffenpoof Song (Feb. 18)
Sunday Morning with Connie Fisher: (Radio Wales) – Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy (Dec. 17)
Lucy Tegg: (Radio Somerset) - We Wish You the Merriest (Dec. 17)
The Jazz House: (Radio Scotland) – A Marshmallow World (Feb. 11)
Tommo: (Radio Cymru) – White Christmas (Dec. 11)

Australia

Each Monday morning from 9 to 11 (Australian Eastern Time) ICC member **Graham Pascoe** presents 'Morning Music' on community radio station 2MCE-FM, located in Bathurst, New South Wales on the campus of Charles Sturt University. Usually he plays recordings of popular music from the 1930s, 40s and 50s. Needless to say, he usually plays a couple of Crosby recordings. The station broadcasts on 92.3 FM in Bathurst and its programs are streamed (but not archived) on www.2mce.org.

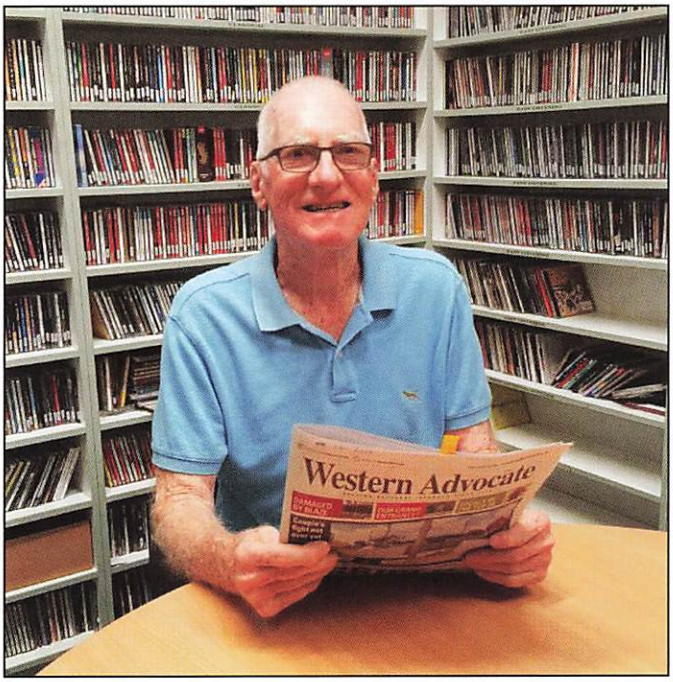
Malcolm Macfarlane macwilmslo@aol.com

(Editor: Graham Pascoe was featured in the Western Advocate paper of January 10 and I thought I would share the article with you.)

Tuned In - Graham does have a bit of a thing for Bing

Graham Pascoe came to Bathurst from Melbourne with his wife, Helen, and their two children in 1972 to teach at what was then the Mitchell College of Advanced Education. His field was marketing, in which he had worked with Shell Oil and ACI.

In 1978, he and another lecturer, Roger Ward, went to the 2MCE studio and recorded a series of programs produced by Rob Connor on the life and career of Bing Crosby. He presented occasional programs during the next couple of decades, again featuring recordings by Crosby. He's been interested in Crosby for over 60 years.



After he retired from Charles Sturt University, he began to broadcast more regularly, but not only recordings by "the old groaner". He also commenced a research project on Bing which led him to make a presentation at a Crosby conference in New York in 2002.

He then continued his research and wrote a book on Bing Crosby's impact on Australian entertainment.

Each Monday from 9am, Graham presents Morning Music on 2MCE. It's an easy listening music program featuring mostly recordings of popular music from the 1930s to the 1950s.

Needless to say, he always includes one or two songs by Bing and he still thinks he can sing like Bing in the shower.

Graham also reads The Talking Newspaper session from noon every Friday.

Michelle O'Connor

GORD ATKINSON'S 'THE CROSBY YEARS'

Gord remembers the early days of Club Crosby in Canada.

As a fallow young fellow, an impressionable teenager, I was captivated by the manner and style of the incomparable Bing. That was over seventy years ago when I became a collector of Crosbyana and a lifelong fan. Since then, there has not been a time when I have not been aware of his influence on my life and career.

My musical education, from jazz to light classics, developed by listening to his superb recordings. His sense of humour and engaging personality on radio and on the screen had a profound effect on my own disposition and identity.

Like many others who were attracted to show business, he was my mentor. As our friendship developed our association encouraged me to pursue a career in broadcasting. My first position in the entertainment world was in my hometown, Toronto, as a writer/publicist with the Compo Company. At the time that I joined their staff in 1947 they were the Canadian distributors of Decca Records.

During that same period I had taken on the position of president of the Canadian branch of Club Crosby. In this role I found myself at odds with a policy of my new employer. It was a ruling that by today's business methods and radio programming seemed ludicrous. Compo officials felt justified in preventing radio stations

from playing Decca records. They were convinced that if people could hear their recordings on the radio, they would not go out and buy them. It was apparent to everyone else in the industry that air play would stimulate sales.

An example of the Compo ban on broadcasting.

Frustrated at not being able to hear Bing's Decca discs on local radio, I wrote to him and his brother/manager, Everett, explaining the broadcast ban. They were in agreement that it should be lifted and assured me that they would have no objections to Crosby records being broadcast.

With their encouragement I contacted the Compo policy makers and requested permission to begin a 30-minute program of selections from Bing's vast Decca library. To my surprise and delight they agreed, but only for a once-a-week show, reserving the right (for the time being) not to lift the ban for general air play. Encouraged by my fellow Crosby fans I approached the most listened-to radio station in Canada, CFRB Toronto. Despite my obvious broadcast deficiencies they accepted my proposed program and services.

Bing was very supportive and sent me recorded greetings and all his latest releases. We would on occasion do telephone interviews. Before long it was decided that the ratings were so good that once a month we would expand our format and invite listeners to attend these special broadcasts. The audience included listeners of all ages and all backgrounds. Never before or since that time, had any entertainer had such broad and universal appeal. A limited number of tickets were issued and everyone in attendance was given a fan club pin and a membership card. We also went on location to cinemas where new Crosby movies were having their Canadian premieres.

Bing with Gord in Toronto in 1965.

The show remained on the air for seven years, from 1948 to 1955, broadcast from both Toronto and Ottawa. It was during that period that our friend, the late Priscilla Koernig of California, was the President of the world-wide Club Crosby.

At the time that we began broadcasting, magnetic tape was not in general use and the only means of recording was on expensive cylindrical discs. While the radio station did record one of the shows to send to Bing, the cost of recording was well beyond my meagre budget. For years thereafter I thought all my old programs were lost in time and space. However for whatever reason (and without my knowledge), someone had recorded one of the shows. To my amazement I was informed a few years ago that it had miraculously crossed the Atlantic and ended up in an old radio collection in Dublin, Ireland. My friend, and Crosby sleuth ``par excellence``, Malcolm Macfarlane, purchased a copy and kindly sent it to me as one of the most surprising gifts of my life.

It was with trepidation that I listened to the program and heard a youthful broadcaster whose voice sounded like it was running at high speed. I felt like I was in the "twilight zone". One of my earliest performances from 1949 had come back to haunt me. However, despite my inadequacy as an apprentice broadcaster, that vintage program brought back a wave of nostalgia with memories of old friends and happy times.

Gord Atkinson

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have left us since our last issue was prepared include:

Vic Damone died on February 11 at the age of 89. The son of Italian immigrants, Vic Damone was born

Vito Rocco Farinola on June 12, 1928 in Brooklyn, New York. His mother, a piano teacher, recognised his musical talent when he was a child, scraping together $1 a week for his singing lessons and subway fare from Brooklyn. On Sundays he sang at Mass with his local church choir.

When his father, an electrician, was injured at work, Vito dropped out of Lafayette High School at the age of 14 and worked as an usher and lift operator at the Paramount Theatre in Manhattan. When he met Perry Como, who was appearing there, he halted the lift between floors, sang for him and sought his advice about continuing voice lessons. Como was impressed, urged him to "keep singing", and recommended him to a local bandleader. In due course, Damone named his first son "Perry".

Vito Farinola decided to call himself Vic Damone, using his mother's maiden name. After winning a place on a radio talent show in 1947, he sang regularly on the air and at nightclubs, and had his first hit record with "Again" from the 1948 film *Road House*.

His first chart-topping million-seller was "You're Breaking My Heart", based on "Mattinata", a ballad written in 1904 by Leoncavallo, the composer of the opera *Pagliacci*. He enjoyed a string of international hits before his recording career was steamrollered in the 1960s by the so-called "British invasion" led by the Beatles.

Said by his idol Frank Sinatra to possess "the best pipes in the business", Damone deployed his velvety tenor voice on a range of popular standards by the greatest masters of the American songbook, among them Cole Porter, George Gershwin and Sammy Cahn.

Damone had made his film debut in 1951, starring in *Rich, Young and Pretty*, before he was drafted into the US Army, where he served for two years before being discharged in the rank of corporal. Although he made further film appearances, in *Athena* and *Deep in Your Heart* (both 1954), *Kismet* (in which he sang "Stranger in Paradise") and *Hit the Deck* (both 1955), Damone missed singing to a live audience and began touring America in concert halls and nightclubs.

During a career spanning more than half a century, he recorded hundreds of songs including covers of "Gigi" and "Ebb Tide". His version of "An Affair to Remember", one of the last songs written by Harry Warren, was a major hit on both sides of the Atlantic in 1957.

The following year, when Damone came to record Lerner and Loewe's "On the Street Where You Live" from their Broadway hit musical *My Fair Lady*, the producer Mitch Miller had the idea of changing Percy Faith's arrangement to make it start with the bridge ("Oh, that towering feeling") which proved a powerful "hook". It gave Damone a top five hit in America, a No. 1 in Britain, and launched him as a major recording star.

It did not last. After the British conquest of the American charts in the mid-1960s, Damone retrenched to concentrate on live appearances on the nightclub circuit. "I accepted rock 'n' roll because I liked some of it, but I wasn't going to participate in it," Damone recalled. "I thought the Beatles were very talented, especially John Lennon. But I made a nice living doing what I do for the next 40 years."

Vic Damone in his heyday

What he did in the 1970s was become a popular – and skittish – fixture in Las Vegas, once paying a well-endowed showgirl to run naked through the men's steamroom while he and some fellow entertainers were there. As the others scrambled for towels, Dean Martin merely nodded approvingly, murmuring: "Lovely … lovely."

In 1971 Damone (who had made several film appearances in the 1950s and 1960s) pulled out of his role as Johnny Fontane, the singer godson of a Sicilian mobster while filming *The Godfather* (1972), saying that the picture was "not in the best interests of Italian-Americans". The part went to Al Martino instead.

Declared bankrupt in the same year, Damone cleared his substantial debts by performing at casinos in Las Vegas and returning to the studio, releasing a further string of albums with RCA.

In 1997 he was inducted into the Songwriter's Hall of Fame. He ceased to practise as a Roman Catholic after divorcing his first wife, and became a follower of the Bahai faith. His ghostwritten memoirs, "Singing Was the

Easy Part", appeared in 2009.

Vic Damone was married five times, first, in 1954, to the Italian actress Pier Angeli, with whom he lived for a time in London; after they divorced four years later, he married, in 1963, another actress, Judy Rawlins.

Like Pier Angeli, who died of barbiturate poisoning in 1971, she died from a drug overdose in 1974. A month later he married, thirdly, Becky Ann Jones, an oil heiress, only for this marriage to end in divorce after 10 years.

In 1987 he married the *Dynasty* star Diahann Carroll. They divorced in 1996, and he married his fifth wife, the fashion designer Rena Rowan, two years later. She died in 2016 and he is survived by three daughters of his second marriage; a son predeceased him.

Surprisingly, he never actually worked with Bing but the link is through the Crosby Pro-Am in which Damone played on several occasions.

Rose Marie, the multi-talented entertainer, died on December 28 at the age of 94. Many people will remember her from her most famous role as television comedy writer Sally Rogers in the CBS situation comedy *The Dick Van Dyke Show* (1961-1966). But there's so much more including a Bing connection.

Rose Marie Mazetta was born in New York City of Italian-Polish parentage on August 15, 1923 and as a child performer she had a successful singing career as Baby Rose Marie - she dropped the "Baby" at the age of 15. On stage from age 3 she also made seven films between 1929 and 1935 including *International House* with W. C. Fields in 1933. Her first appearance on celluloid was in *Baby Rose Marie, the Child Wonder* (1929) a Vitaphone short in which she sang three songs. **In** her book "Hold the Roses", she describes a visit to Paramount (when she was seven) to see Bing "who was very kind and cordial and that was about it."

Rose Marie became a very successful singer and comedienne in the 1940s and went on to appear on Perry Como's radio show. She married trumpeter Bobby Guy in 1946. Before he joined the Forces, Bobby had been with the Kay Kyser band and in 1946 he was approached by Perry Botkin to join John Scott Trotter's regular ensemble supporting Bing on his radio show and on record. Bobby remained with JST until 1954. Rose Marie herself guested on Bing's Chesterfield show on April 25, 1951 when she exchanged some dialogue with him and then sang "My Blue Heaven".

After her 5-year stint with Dick Van Dyke, she later portrayed Myrna Gibbons on CBS's *The Doris Day Show* and was also a frequent panellist on the game show *Hollywood Squares.* From 1977-81, she co-starred with Rosemary Clooney, Helen O' Connell and Margaret Whiting in the musical revue 4 *Girls* 4, which toured the U.S. and appeared on television several times.

When researching the book about Rosemary Clooney that Ken Crossland and your Editor wrote together, I spoke to Rose Marie by telephone in September 2011 and she spoke very warmly about Bing saying "he was just wonderful and we became friends." Her husband was a golfer and he wanted to join Lakeside Golf Club where Bing was a member. To help him, Bing signed his application form to join the club but when there was no response after two months, Mr. Guy contacted the club to be told that Bing had never signed an application before and they wondered if it was genuine. An official duly contacted Bing who confirmed that he had indeed signed the form and Bobby was then admitted into the club. Bobby also played in Bing's Pebble Beach Pro-am on several occasions.

I asked Rose Marie what her husband (who died in 1964) said about working with Bing. She said that it was "the thrill of a lifetime" for him and it seems that John Scott Trotter often wrote arrangements which showcased Bobby's playing. Bobby can be heard to particularly good effect on "My Devotion" from the GE Show of May 7, 1953.

Last November, she was the subject of a major documentary, "Wait for Your Laugh," directed by Jason Wise. Reviewing it for *The New York Times*, Jason Zinoman wrote, "In between the successes of Lucille Ball and Carol Burnett, Rose Marie, this movie argues, was one of the most important female comic voices in America." She is survived by her daughter, Georgiana, and son-in-law, Steven Rodrigues.

Nanette Fabray, the actress / comedienne, died on February 22 at her home in Palos Verdes, Calif. She was 97.

Ruby Nanette Bernadette Theresa Fabares was born on Oct. 27, 1920, in San Diego. Her family soon moved to Los Angeles, where Nanette began working in vaudeville at age 4. Her father was a train engineer; her mother took in boarders. Ms. Fabray recalled that her other childhood job was ironing lodgers' shirts.

She attended Los Angeles Junior College but she had academic difficulties because of an undiagnosed hearing problem. The problem was eventually corrected by surgery, and she became a spokeswoman and advocate for the hearing-impaired. Her honours representing the handicapped include the President's Distinguished Service Award and the Eleanor Roosevelt Humanitarian Award.

Ms. Fabray was 21 when she appeared in her first Broadway show, "Let's Face It," (1941), a musical comedy, starring Danny Kaye and Eve Arden, about three married women who hire soldiers as escorts. She left the show in 1943 to take a small replacement role in Rodgers and Hart's "By Jupiter."

Ms. Fabray replaced Celeste Holm in 1945 as the star of Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg's "Bloomer Girl," a musical comedy set in the 1860s. Two years later she married one of the show's publicists, David Tebet. They divorced in 1951, and in 1957 she married Ranald MacDougall, a screenwriter who also directed Bing's film *Man on Fire* (1957). Mr. MacDougall died in 1973.

Ms. Fabray was 28 when she received the Tony for best actress in a musical for her performance in "Love Life," a collection of sketches with lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner and music by Kurt Weill. It was her seventh Broadway show and followed her success in Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn's "High Button Shoes" the season before.

In 1956 she won two Emmy Awards, as best comedienne (as the category was then known) and best actress in a supporting role, for her work on "Caesar's Hour," the follow-up to "Your Show of Shows," in which Sid Caesar had starred with Imogene Coca.

The next year, Ms. Fabray won another Emmy for the series, 10 months after she had been dismissed by the producers. Years later she said she had been fired because her agent made demands for her third-season contract that the producers considered unreasonable.

Ms. Fabray nearly gave her life for the show. In 1955, she was hospitalized for almost two weeks after being knocked unconscious by a falling pipe backstage during a broadcast.

The stage and the small screen turned out to be Ms. Fabray's métiers, but she started out in film. Her first movie role was as a lady-in-waiting to Elizabeth I (Bette Davis) in *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex* (1939). In that and the two other film dramas she made that year, she was billed as Nanette Fabares. She changed the spelling of her surname after too many public mispronunciations. Ed Sullivan reading a cue card, once mispronounced her name as "Nanette Fa-bare-ass."

Ms. Fabray had one notable film success: the Comden and Green musical *The Band Wagon* (1953), directed by Vincente Minnelli. The film included the number "Triplets," in which she, Fred Astaire and Jack Buchanan played infants, with adult-size heads and torsos but short, stubby baby legs.

Bing and Nanette on the Hollywood Palace show.

After the Caesar TV show, Ms. Fabray attempted a sitcom of her own, but "The Nanette Fabray Show" (1961), also known as "Westinghouse Playhouse," lasted less than a season. She went on to four decades of television movies and guest appearances on series, including "Love, American Style," "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" (as Ms. Moore's mother), "One Day at a Time" (as Bonnie Franklin's mother) and the 1990s sitcom "Coach," on which she played the mother of her real-life niece Shelley Fabares.

Back on the New York stage in 1963, she received a Tony nomination for her role as a fictional first lady in "Mr. President," Irving Berlin's last Broadway show. Her final Broadway appearance went less well: "No Hard Feelings," a 1973 comedy that also starred Eddie Albert, closed after opening night.

Ms. Fabray continued to do stage work (in 2007 she appeared in "The Damsel Dialogues" in Sherman Oaks, Calif.), but said more than once that live television was her first love. As she told a reporter for The New York Times in 1955, "It involves a form of insanity that reminds me of make-believe games that you played as a child."

Bing had known her for many years and they were photographed dancing together at a social event in 1945. She appeared in two Hollywood Palace shows with him and on the show on March 26, 1966 they did a hilarious medley together tracing the development of music from the cave man of prehistoric times. Bing later wrote that Nanette had been suffering with 'flu and they did not know whether she would be able to complete the taping of the show in time. The medley can be seen on YouTube.

Bill Harbach, the television producer, director and author, died on December 18 at the good age of 98. Known to Crosby followers as the producer of the *Hollywood Palace* shows, he had a long and varied career winning won four Emmy Awards and a Peabody Award. Harbach also produced and directed special events, including eight ASCAP celebrations for renowned composers, lyricists and librettists.

Born on Oct. 12, 1919, in Yonkers, New York, he was the son of American lyricist, librettist and ASCAP co-founder Otto Harbach.

Bill Harbach attended Brown University and spent five years in the Coast Guard patrolling for enemy subs during World War II. He came to California and was signed as a stock player by MGM, and he appeared in several films.

Subsequently returning to New York, Harbach managed one of the biggest nightclub acts of its day, Kay Thompson and the Williams Brothers (Andy Williams was the youngest). He then started at NBC, editing, directing and eventually producing shows before an association with Steve Allen began. The show he produced for Allen eventually became *Tonight!* which went nationwide and live from New York City in

June 1953. Jimmy Fallon made Harbach an honored guest on the first night he hosted *The Tonight Show*, now back in New York, in 2014.

In January 1964, Harbach and producing partner Nick Vanoff launched the Saturday night hit *The Hollywood Palace*, which had replaced a failed — and very expensive — two-hour talk show hosted by Jerry Lewis.

"When they asked us to do [The Hollywood Palace,] we wanted to have real producing control, and we wanted a different host each time for this giant vaudeville show," Harbach said in an interview. "ABC said no. They said, 'People like to have the same man in their living room every week.'

"We said, 'Then get yourself another producer. We want to do it this way or not at all.' And they were desperate, so they said, 'Oh Jesus. OK. We think you're wrong, but go ahead.' We had every goddamn giant on the show. Bing Crosby. Bette Davis. Joan Crawford. Edward G. Robinson. Dean Martin. The world!"

Harbach stood in the back of the audience during taping, and his laugh was heard on virtually every show.

Bill Harbach and Bing together in the 1960s

His first interaction with Bing had been in 1960 when he was producer-director of *The Bing Crosby Show* which had Perry Como as the main guest. In the following years, Bill Harbach produced several of Bing's TV specials as well as producing shows and TV specials starring the likes of Morey Amsterdam, Milton Berle, Maurice Chevalier and John Wayne. He won a second Emmy for his work on *Gypsy in My Soul*, a 1976 special that featured Shirley MacLaine and Lucille Ball and was written by Fred Ebb.

Harbach also produced and directed ASCAP celebrations for Johnny Mercer, Ira Gershwin, Arthur Schwartz, Howard Dietz, Harold Arlen, Alan Jay Lerner, Frederick Loewe and Jimmy Van Heusen. Held in Broadway theaters, they featured songs performed by Julie Andrews, Barbara Cook, Kitty Carlisle Hart and others.

Martin McQuade interviewed Bill Harbach in depth back in 2006 and please see his article in BING magazine, spring 2006 for further information about Bing's involvement with Mr. Harbach.

Danny Daniels, the Broadway, film, and TV dancer and choreographer who enjoyed a career that lasted from 1941 to 2001, capped by a Tony Award for *The Tap Dance Kid* in 1984, died on July 7 last year at age 92,

Born Daniel Giagni Jr., he began his career in Hollywood in 1939, while still in his mid-teens, as "Blackie", one of the newsboys, in Bing's film *The Star Maker*. He made his Broadway debut in the 1941 musical comedy *Best Foot Forward*, as the appropriately named character "Dancing Boy". He also appeared as a featured dancer in musicals *Billion Dollar Baby* (1945) and *Street Scene* (1947), and was a featured dancer in *Make Mine Manhattan* (1948). He replaced Harold Lang in the role of Bill Calhoun during the original run of *Kiss Me, Kate.*

He had a long stint in Hollywood including being dance director on one Bing's TV specials in 1960. Daniels then returned to Broadway in 1962, making his debut as choreographer with the Charles Strouse-Lee Adams-Mel Brooks musical *All-American*, creating choreography for Ray Bolger. With a reputation as a star-friendly choreographer cemented, he created dances for Liza Minnelli and Christopher Walken in the 1963 Off-Broadway revival of *Best Foot Forward,* for Tammy Grimes in *High Spirits*, for Norman Wisdom in *Walking Happy*, and for Liv Ullman in *I Remember Mama*.

He's perhaps most widely known for his choreography on the 1981 musical *Pennies from Heaven*, again working with Walken, and teaching Steve Martin to tap dance.

In 1991 Daniels choreographed Liza Minnelli and a group of dancers who are supposed to look like amateurs in the film *Stepping Out*.

Daniels' Broadway career reached a peak with the 1983 musical *The Tap Dance Kid*, about a dance wunderkind. The musical starred Hinton Battle and Samuel E. Wright, with Alfonso Ribeiro in the title role. Ribeiro was replaced during the run by 10-year-old future Tony Award winner Savion Glover, making his Broadway debut doing Daniels' choreography.

Dennis Edwards Jr. the American soul and R&B singer who was best known as the frontman in The Temptations vocal group on Motown Records, died on February 1, 2018 at the age of 74. Edwards joined The Temptations in 1968, replacing David Ruffin and sang with the top-selling group from 1968 to 1976, 1980

to 1984 and 1987 to 1989. In the mid-1980s, he attempted a solo career, scoring a hit in 1984 with "Don't Look Any Further" (featuring Siedah Garrett). He was with The Temptations when they appeared on the *Hollywood Palace* show on March 1, 1969. They sang their current chart hit "Runaway Child, Running Wild" and then Bing joined them to sing "My Girl", a performance which has been watched more than 147,000 times on YouTube.

THE WAY WE WERE

The section of the magazine where we look at what Bing was doing in years gone by.

100 YEARS AGO

Bing (aged 14) was still in his second year at Gonzaga High School and on March 5, 1918, he took part in the Annual Elocution Contest at St. Aloysius Hall reciting "Romancin'" in front of a packed house. "Romancin'" was written by James Whitcomb Riley who had died in 1916 and it had no less than thirteen verses!

75 YEARS AGO

1943 started in dramatic fashion. On January 3, Bing played golf and went on for a meal. During his absence, the Crosby home at 10500 Camarillo Street caught fire at 7:15 p.m. The damage was considerable following a problem with the Christmas tree lights, later alleged by Phillip Crosby to have been caused by his brother Gary. No one was hurt other than a pet cocker spaniel which was found suffocated in the children's apartment upstairs. Bing was contacted by phone by Johnny Burke and when he was convinced that the story was true, he returned home and pulled out a shoe from the debris containing a large amount of cash. The loss was partially covered by insurance but with rebuilding out of the question because of wartime conditions, Bing eventually sold the charred site for $15,271. Bing and his family stayed at the Beverly Hills Hotel for a spell before renting a property from Marion Davies in Beverly Hills. Bing then bought a seventeen-room Georgian Colonial home on South Mapleton Drive in Holmby Hills, near the Los Angeles Country Club.

Also in January he arranged to buy a 3,500 acre ranch, a few miles east of Elko, Nevada, on Humboldt River (the old Jube Wright Ranch, 7J's Livestock Co.).

A few days after the fire, Bing hosted the *Kraft Music Hall* which had become a half-hour program for the first time. The guests during the period until April 15 included Charles Ruggles, Cass Daley, Andy Devine, Ginny Simms, Victor Borge, Alan Hale, Bert Lahr, Eddie Bracken, Lucille Ball and Frank McHugh. Leo "Ukie" Sherin provided the comic relief.

Trudy Erwin (formerly a member of the Music Maids vocal group) became the resident female singer.

> I loved singing with Bing. He was totally relaxed and had a great sense of humor. He stood on one side of the mike and I stood on the other. We each had a music rack for the scripts and music. As Bing finished reading a page he would let it fall to the floor. When the show was over, the stage was covered with sheets of paper.
>
> In addition to singing, I also did what was called the weekly "memory spot" with Bing. He played "Harry" talking to his wife "Trudy" and at the end of our brief conversation we segued into a duet. I also had small talking parts during the guest spots.
>
> We rehearsed every Wednesday evening and then worked all day Thursday until showtime. Often, after the KMH broadcast, Bing would invite several of us to the Palladium for dinner and dancing to whatever big band was in town....
>
> Those were truly wonderful, wonderful times.
>
> (Trudy Erwin [Mrs. Virginia MacKenzie], writing on the cover of the LP "Bing & Trudy - On the Air", March, 1985.)

The groaner was now fully involved in AFRS shows and he recorded a *Mail Call* show with Alice Faye, Tommy Dorsey, Cesar Romero, and Andy Devine. He followed this with *Command Performance* shows with Richard Crooks, Dinah Shore and Bob Hope and also some *Song Sheet* and *Personal Album* shows. Bing guested on Bob Hope's radio show on January 26 with Frances Langford, and Jerry Colonna.

With Bob Hope and Frances Langford

Other radio appearances were in a radio version of the film *Holiday Inn* with Dinah Shore for the Lady Esther Screen Guild, "America Salutes the President's Birthday" (also known as the March of Dimes Show) and a Lux Radio Theater version of *Road to Morocco* with Bob Hope and Ginny Simms.

Many weekends Bing entertained at Army camps or

took part in war bond sales golf matches and one of these was on March 6 in Phoenix, Arizona and the local paper reviewed the show.

> More than 1,000 Phoenicians and winter visitors crowded the banks of the colorful Arizona Biltmore Hotel pool yesterday afternoon in warm sunshine to hear Bing Crosby offer vocal selections in return for each purchase of an $18.75 bond following a fashion show. . . .
>
> Introduced by glib-talking Phil Silvers, Crosby made his way to the platform through autograph seekers and explained a 15-minute tardiness by saying one of his horses was dying and he wanted to see at least one finish. . . . In response to bond sales the crooner sang "As Time Goes By," "I've Heard That Song Before," "Time on My Hands," "Praise the Lord," "Melancholy Baby," and repeated "Fighting Sons of the Navy" for several purchasers.
>
> (*Arizona Republic*, March 7, 1943)

On January 31, Bing won the thirty-six-hole finals at the Lakeside Golf Club championships for the fourth time by defeating John Leach eight and seven. Bing had previously won the title in 1936, 1937, and 1942.

February 20 saw him taking part in a Gershwin Festival concert at the Civic Auditorium in San Francisco with Paul Whiteman and Dinah Shore. Bing and Dinah sang a medley of songs from "Porgy and Bess". The takings of $40,000 were a record for a one night musical event in San Francisco. All seats in the auditorium were sold and the concert was carried by special microphone to the Opera House where additional seats had been made available

> ... he and Dinah Shore appeared in San Francisco with Paul Whiteman and The King's Men at what was called a "George Gershwin Memorial Festival". That whole show climaxed anything I had ever seen before or since. He sang "Somebody Loves Me" and "Maybe" and he and Dinah did all those duets from "Porgy and Bess". It was really wonderful.
>
> (Helen Tolton, writing in *BINGANG*, summer 1996)

There was another Gershwin Memorial Concert at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium on March 31. Paul Whiteman conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Dinah Shore and Bing again sang a Porgy and Bess medley.

At the Academy Awards ceremony held on March 4 in the Cocoanut Grove at the Ambassador Hotel, "White Christmas" won the Oscar for "Best Song". Around this time, Bing filmed a test to play Will Rogers in a biopic for Warner Brothers. His contract with Paramount gave him an outside picture privilege. In fact the picture was not made until 1950, when Will Rogers Junior played his late father instead.

Bing had not made any recordings for Decca since August 1, 1942, as the American Federation of Musicians had imposed a recording ban by its members which continued until September 18, 1943. However in April 1943, he signed a new seven-year contract minus options to record for Decca. The deal called for a guaranteed $500,000 over the seven-year period as against sales royalties. Jack Kapp tore up the old contract which still had two years to run. That month, Mr. Crosby's recording of "Moonlight Becomes You" reached number one in the charts.

In March, Louella O. Parsons' newspaper column stated, "Only a few of Mrs. Bing Crosby's intimate friends know she is in the Cedars of Lebanon Hospital." It is not known what ailed her but she had recovered sufficiently by April 17 to join Bing to travel by train to Mexico City for a vacation. During his time in Mexico, Bing sang in a show at Palacio de Bellas Artes and is said to have done a radio broadcast in Spanish for the Red Cross. He was also reported to have sold seven of his horses to a banker named Carlos Gomez for $13,000. Following his vacation, he set out on a war bond selling tour with Phil Silvers.

50 YEARS AGO

1968 started with Bing acting as chief commentator at the Bing Crosby Pro-Am at Pebble Beach which was won by Johnny Pott in a sudden death play-off with Billy Casper and Bruce Devlin. For a change, the weather was gorgeous and over 25,000 spectators attended on the Saturday. Dean Martin and Phil Harris were among the celebrities playing.

During the 4-month period under review, Bing appeared in a couple of *Hollywood Palace* shows with Peggy Lee, Florence Henderson, the King Sisters, Joe Bushkin and Sid Caesar. His regular appearances on *The American Sportsman* show saw him and Phil Harris hunting sand grouse in Tanzania.

> This fine show for the hunting and fishing crowd is back and had an all-star cast for the sendoff seg . . . Second part of the hour featured Bing Crosby and Phil Harris hunting sand grouse in Africa. If you have to spend viewing time in a shooting blind, it couldn't have been in more entertaining company. The Harris-Crosby banter was like a nostalgic visit to one of those old Hope-Crosby road musicals. And, indeed, the seg even had music as Harris and Crosby dueted a seemingly offhand ditty on the whole affair to close it out. Both, incidentally, are excellent shots, proving it by bagging a score of birds.
>
> (*Variety*, January 31, 1968)

On February 8, Bing and Kathryn flew to New York as Bing had a number commitments to fulfil. First, he recorded the first part of the *Thoroughly Modern Bing* album with "Bugs" Bower and his Orchestra for Pickwick at Mastertone Recording Studio in Long Island City, New York.

> Working with Bing Crosby was wonderful! He was the

consummate pro—cheerful, prepared, knowledgeable, funny and very creative. . . . We rehearsed over the telephone—with Bing in Beverly Hills and me in New York City. It took a matter of minutes to set the vocal keys and musical routines. Everything was so easy. The following month, I met him in the lobby of a recording studio in New York City and he said, "Hi, I'm Bing." And I said, "Hi, I'm Bugs." With that, he said "Let's go!" and we were off.

Bing requested that only an engineer and I be present—even though all the singers in the vocal group and the musicians desperately wanted to attend this session. He knew all the words to all the songs. (A music copyist had made printed lyrics for him to sing from, but he only occasionally glanced at them.)

On the first song, "My Friend, the Doctor" (the longest song on the album) we spent about 25 minutes with vocal retakes. To my chagrin, when the engineer, Warren Slatten, tried to play Bing's track, nothing was there! The vocal track was silent. No Bing, no sound, nothing!

I was really upset because I had no idea what was wrong with the recording. What could have happened? Well, we were lucky. Warren discovered a tiny piece of recording tape had somehow become trapped behind the recording head, canceling Bing's vocal track. Bing could not have been more understanding. He just shrugged his shoulders and said, "Let's do it again."

Bing loved to sing and record—it was obvious when working with him that this was his life. He asked about the musicians, especially the ones who played the ad-lib jazz choruses. He complimented me on the arrangements and, overall, thought we had put together a very happy, professional-sounding album. . . .

("Bugs" Bower, writing in *Sheet Music* Magazine, July/August 2001)

On February 10, Bing taped a contribution to Ed Sullivan's tribute to Irving Berlin on his eightieth birthday, which was shown on CBS-TV on May 5. Later he took part in a rehearsal for *The Night of the Century* (a benefit for the USO being held to open the New Madison Square Garden) which went on to the early hours of the next morning.

Rehearsing for *The Night of the Century.*

The Night of the Century show duly took place at New Madison Square Garden the following day with Bing singing a medley with Bob Hope and several solos. He received a standing ovation from the crowd of 19,832.

The next day, the groaner completed the recording of the *Thoroughly Modern Bing* album before leaving for South Carolina for hunting with Phil Harris.

> Meanwhile there is overwhelming evidence that Mr. Crosby has lost none of his charm or skill in *Thoroughly Modern Bing* (Stateside SL10257). He works his lasting magic on "Talk to the Animals," "Love Is Blue," "Chim Chim Cheree," and other modern songs of quality plus the oldie "Ding Dong the Witch Is Dead" with the same ease and warmth that was discernible in 1928. He even transforms a blatant flag-waver like "What's More American" into something tolerable, and is the first singer to hold my attention throughout "Puff (The Magic Dragon)" without causing a single wince.
> (*The Gramophone*, January, 1969)

On March 9, Bing and his three young children flew into Spokane and then visited the Gonzaga campus where Bing was awarded the University's highest accolade, the DeSmet Medal. He then presented Gonzaga with the nation's first Microfilm Research Center.

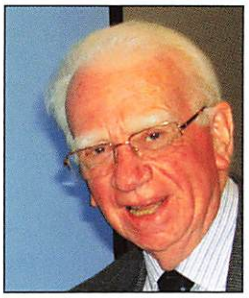
> ...Bing's reminiscences and his stories about his children, who were seated with their Uncle Ted in the front row, were greeted with enthusiasm. Bing spoke without notes but not without the informal facility, the startlingly accurate use of surprising words, that has become his trademark....Obviously moved, with the medal on his chest, Bing said, "Receiving this medal gives me the opportunity to say, and really mean, that whatever I have been able to accomplish, whatever I have done, if it has been worthwhile, is directly attributable to the principles that were inculcated in me right here on this campus. I am very grateful, very pleased, and very happy."
> (As quoted in *Spireside*, the bulletin of Gonzaga University, spring 1968)

At the end of March, Bing was back at work recording further songs for Longines at Coast Recorders, San Francisco, which subsequently formed part of the second *Bing Crosby's Treasury–The Songs I Love* set. Again, Bing sang to the prerecorded tracks laid down by an orchestra conducted by Geoff Love in London.

Easter found the Crosby family back at their home in Las Cruces in Mexico where they were joined by the Hearst family, including Patty, who was later to be kidnapped. They all helped to clean the local church. During the next few weeks at Las Cruces, the Crosbys were visited by Cliff Robertson and his wife Dina Merrill, Dorothy McGuire, Henry Mancini, Bill Harbach, Nick Vanoff and Edgar Bergen.

KEEPING TRACK

Richard Baker gives us details of some excellent new releases



COMPACT DISCS

There is not a great deal to cover this time around but what we lack in quantity is fully compensated for in quality and content. In the last issue of BING I was excited about two issues announced by Bing Crosby Enterprises. The listening experience confirms that early opinion.

New Tricks: 60th Anniversary Deluxe Edition (Original album, remastered). **Universal B0027587-02**
Around $9 (US), up to £17 (UK)

(Original Album) - 1. Alabamy Bound (originally recorded June 18 1956) / 2. When I Take My Sugar to Tea (Dec. 29 1955) / 3. Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea (June 20 1955) / 4. Georgia on My Mind (June 18 1956) / 5. I'm Confessin' (That I Love You) (Aug. 23 1956) / 6. If I Could Be With You (June 18 1956) / 7. Avalon (Sept. 30 1955)/ 8. Chinatown, My Chinatown (Aug. 22 1956) / 9. You're Driving Me Crazy (June 18 1956) / 10. On the Alamo (Mar. 14 1956) / 11. Chicago (Aug. 23 1956) / 12. Softly, As in a Morning Sunrise (June 18 1956) / - ("Bonus" tracks) - 13. Rain (Oct. 28 1957) / 14. Church Bells (April 3 1958) / 15. I'll Remember Today* (Oct 28. 1957) / 16. My How the Time Goes By* (Oct. 28 1957) / 17. Chee Chee-oo Chee (Sang the Little Bird)* (July 1 1955) / 18. Surprise* (April 4 1958) / 19. All the Time* (April 3 1958) / 20. Gigi* (April 3 1958) / 21. Tammy* (28 Oct. 1957) / 22. Big D* (with Lindsay Crosby) Take 2 (Aug. 22 1956) / 23. Allegheny Moon* (with Lindsay Crosby) (Aug. 22 1956) / 24. More Than You Know (Aug. 23 1956).

Some (marked), are to the best of my knowledge new to CD. All are with the Buddy Cole group and are taken from the studio recordings made for the CBS radio shows of the 1950s. The gaps in the sequence left after the issue of the "Mosaic" set are steadily being closed. As with all of the titles recorded for the broadcasts the sound is very clean and the rapport between Bing and the Cole combo again imparts a relaxed freshness. Unfortunately "More Than You Know" contains a distinct wobble during the last ten seconds or so which was not present on an early LP. The comprehensive and informative notes by Martin McQuade mention the fact that "My How the Time Goes By" was associated with Patti Page. However the track listing credits Adamson and McHugh for writing it. They did indeed write such a song in the '40s but this is not it. The song Patti and Bing sing is by Cy Coleman and Carolyn Leigh. Another error occurs for "More Than You Know", composed by Vincent Youmans with lyrics by Billy Rose and Edward Eliscu, and not Creamer – Layton as shown. The original twelve tracks from "New Tricks" and "More Than You Know" were all previously shown in discographies with the mastering date of March 14th 1957 when master numbers were allocated for the LP issue. We now have the actual recording dates as shown. Note that "Big D" appears as an alternative take from the same session on "Among My Souvenirs" below.*

Prices quoted by many sources in the UK seem odd. At the time of writing Amazon quote £17.80. I found mine for under £7.

Among My Souvenirs: More Treasures from the Crosby Archive. (2 CD set) **Universal B0027588-02**
Around $16 (US), around £20 (UK)

Disc 1:

1. Please (radio promo disc for *The Big Broadcast*, summer 1932) / 2. I'm Getting Sentimental over You (Woodbury Soap, Oct.30 1934) / 3. The Day You Came Along / 4. Bing & Jack Oakie at Paramount / 5. Boo Boo Boo (3-5 radio promo for *Too Much Harmony*, summer 1933) / 6. Roll Along Prairie Moon (#1 Jan. 23 1936) / 7. I've Been Floating Down the Old Green River (#1 May 19 1938) / 8. Hello Hawaii (#1 June 30 1938) / 9. When Irish Eyes Are Smiling (#1 March 14 1940) / 10. You Forgot Your Gloves (private recording 1942) / 11. A Horse That Knows the Way Back Home (Radio promo 1943) / 12. She Is the Sunshine of Virginia (#1 July 22 1943) / 13. What Do You Do in the Infantry? (#1 Jan. 20 1944) / 14. Good Morning Mr. Zip Zip Zip (#1 Jan. 21 1943) / 15. I've Told Every Little Star (Jerome Kern Memorial broadcast Dec. 9 1945) / 16. Oh, But I Do (Decca rejected take March 22 1946) / 17. Minute Maid Radio Jingle (Extended Version) (#2 Summer 1950) / 18. Alabamy Bound (with Lindsay Crosby) (#2 Aug. 10 1949).

#1 = KMH broadcasts #2 = Minute Maid broadcasts

Disc 2:
1. Be My Life's Companion (#3 March 26 1952) / 2. Undecided (#3 Jan. 16 1952) / 3. Please Mr. Sun (#3 April 9 1952) / 4. Moonlight and Roses with Bob Crosby (#3 Jan. 1951) / 5. Tell Me Why (#3 April 2 1952) / 6. Dream a Little Dream of Me (#4 April 7 1954) / 7. Eternally (#4 Nov.15 1953) / 8. True Love / 9. In a Little Spanish Town / 10. I'm Confessin' (That I Love You) (tracks 8 – 10 recorded live at Fall River, 1955) / 11. Big D (with Lindsay Crosby) Take 1 not used (BC Show Aug. 22 1956) / 12. Old Cape Cod (Ford Road Show July 17 1957) /13. The NATO Song (Feb. 9 1959) / 14. Among My Souvenirs (Crosby – Clooney Show Feb. 1960) / 15. I Left My Heart in San Francisco (BC Show Dec. 24 1962) /16. Paint Your Wagon Medley: I'm on My Way/I Talk to the Trees/I Still See Elisa/They Call the Wind Maria (with Diana Ross and the Supremes) (BC TV Show Oct. 23 1968) /17. Send in the Clowns (Live at Concord Pavilion Aug. 16 1977).
#3 = Chesterfield broadcasts
#4 General Electric broadcasts ("Dream a Little Dream of Me" and "Eternally" recorded for GE shows but not used before the series was terminated).

This wonderful issue follows the same trend as the earlier "So Rare: Treasures from the Crosby Archive" and, like it, encompasses a wide range of material from every stage of Bing's career covering the rarely heard and hitherto unknown. Audio quality is very good considering the age of the earlier items though some have lost a little brightness compared to versions that I have heard, possibly due to the application of noise suppression. "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" sounds too slow, giving Bing an unnaturally deep voice and the accompaniment ponderous and tentative. This is often found among the KMH tape transcriptions but usually compensated for. Speeding up playback through editing software, reducing playing time by about 7 seconds, produced a more natural sound. There are comprehensive and informative notes (not credited but I assume by Robert Bader who writes an introduction). There is a lot here to delight all die–hard fans, with radio promo discs, a private recording and rarely heard items from radio and TV shows, a very unusual live benefit performance (the 1956 Fall River session) including Bing's typically self-deprecating introduction, and several attempts at the NATO song. "I've Told Every Little Star" has Bing sing "Why haven't ***you*** *told you", an amusing error. The 1968 TV medley from "Paint Your Wagon" includes an item not broadcast in the show and the medley has been remixed from original multi track tapes into genuine stereo. There are none of the major hits here, but that is the point – it's all rarities from the archive of enormous interest to fans. The "live" recordings are very nice to have and "Send in the Clowns" is very well done with feeling and a quiet guitar accompaniment. Despite the rarity of most items at least three tracks have previously appeared on CD in the not very distant past. Note that "Big D" appears as an alternative take from the same session on "New Tricks".*

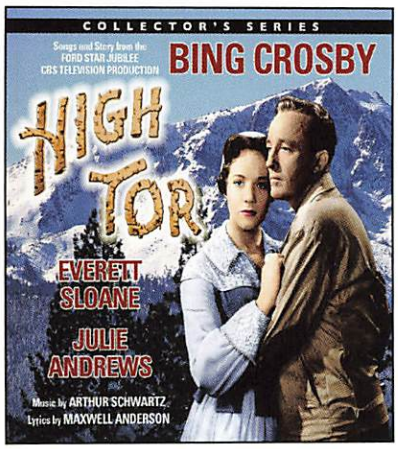
Again prices in the UK are puzzling. Amazon, usually cheaper than most, quote £24.32. Mine was under £14.

Thoroughly Modern Bing **P.I.P. / Unidisc Music Inc. AGEK-2677** **Around $18 (US), around £16 (UK)**
Note that some sources in the UK are only importing individually to order and charge an extra £5-£6.
1. Talk to the Animals / 2. Love Is Blue / 3. Ding-Dong! The Witch Is Dead / 4. Chim Chim Cher-ee / 5. (I Call You) Sunshine / 6. High Hopes / 7. Thoroughly Modern Millie / 8. My Friend, the Doctor / 9. Up, Up and Away / 10. Puff, the Magic Dragon / 11.What's More American?

I draw attention to this reissued CD, which has not been available for some years. No claim is made about remastering but to my ears the sound is exceptionally good and I think some improvement is evident. It comes in a card gatefold format. The original artwork and notes (by Fred Romary) are replicated. There is a slightly odd history. Thirteen titles were recorded by Pickwick (P.I.P.) in 1968 for the original disc, and they have since issued it under different titles - "Sing-A-Long with Bing" and most recently, though now over 20 years ago, as "Bing Crosby at His Best" but only the eleven songs shown were included. Laserlight issued it under licence as "A Visit to the Movies", but omitted "(I Call You) Sunshine" and added "Where the Rainbow Ends" not included here. The thirteenth title "That's All I Want from You" has never been issued in any form and possibly we should resign ourselves to never hearing it. Alternative takes exist of "High Hopes" and "Where the Rainbow Ends" (and conceivably others). A parody recording also exists of "High Hopes" recorded later by others. So an opportunity has been lost to bring together the complete original tracks. Of

the musical content, I feel Bing's self- proclaimed attempt to be modern was not wholly successful, and it was in any event surely a little anachronistic in the case of "Thoroughly Modern Millie", set in 1922 with lyrics to suit but treated to a 1960s big band. The choice of songs was not ideal – though many were successful within the musicals from which they derive, in isolation they are less so. Some were originally aimed at children but adults find the refrains overly repetitive. When coupled with some unsubtle arrangements they do little to inspire. Nonetheless Bing brings his professionalism and enthusiasm to bear, and there are some successes to improve the proceedings – "Up, Up and Away" and "Love Is Blue" among them. The issue fills a gap that has existed for some time, and on that ground together with the very good audio quality it deserves a welcome. It is a pity that some holes remain unplugged.

High Tor. (Original Cast Recording with Bing and Julie Andrews). **Stage Door Records Collector's Series. Stage 2420. From around $12 (US) £10 (UK).**
2. Living One Day at a Time (BC) / 4. When You're in Love (BC) / 6. Sad is the Life of the Sailor's Wife (JA) / 8. When You're in Love (ES, JA) / 10. A Little Love, A Little While (BC) / 12. When You're in Love (ES) / 14. John Barleycorn (BC) / 16. Once Upon a Long Ago (JA) / 18. Once Upon a Long Ago (BC) / 20. John Barleycorn (Reprise) (BC)/ 22. A Little Love, A Little While (BC)
ES = Everett Sloane.



High Tor is notable for two reasons. It is said to be the first musical play made for CBS television, showing in the US on 10th March 1956, and it was the debut on TV for Julie Andrews. Ms Andrews had become known in the UK as the child foil to, of all things, a radio ventriloquist, and had recently been performing in the NY production of "The Boy Friend" but had yet to make her name in the stage version of "My Fair Lady" and was some years from "The Sound of Music". Oddly there is no number for Bing and Julie to sing together. The reception at the time was lukewarm and none of the songs stand out though they are pleasant enough and "When You're In Love" has warm sentiments. The producers of this disc clearly think something of it as they have included two bonus tracks of contrasting performances, by the LeRoy Holmes Orchestra and The Lancers. The LP has long been out of circulation, so this CD is very welcome and should be sought by many. It comes in a card sleeve with insert notes, and the audio quality is better by some margin than many examples of TV from the era. Each of the musical tracks is preceded by a narrative spoken by Bing to give an understanding of the story and I have not listed those tracks. Taken as a whole the production is quite entertaining. I know that some fans admire Bing's speaking voice. There is quite a bit of it here.

As a matter of general interest I would draw attention to an increasing trend for prices quoted by Internet suppliers to vary extraordinarily widely on both sides of the Atlantic, so it pays more than ever to shop around. Amazon, in the UK at least, seem to be moving away from carrying its own stocks of low volume lines and is often dramatically undercut in price by their "partners" listing on the Amazon site.

There are still numbers of new and sealed copies of *The Chronological Bing Crosby* at £1.99 and $2.80 (plus postage) listed on eBay.

DVDs and BLU-RAY

King of Jazz (BLU-RAY or DVD)
The Criterion Collection **Region** A/1 Aspect ratio: 1.33:1 Original aspect ratio: 1.2:1
Around $27.70 (Blu-ray-1 disc) or $20.70 (DVD-2 discs)
Several members have reported very favourably on the restored version of King of Jazz which has been shown at several venues over the last year or so. By the time you read this it will be available on Blu-ray or DVD with a number of extras, including a commentary by Gary Giddins and items by other informed critics including Michael Feinstein. There are also two 1930 cartoons and two "shorts" from 1929 and 1933, making up something like a complete early 1930s cinema programme. Different sources give a variety of running times for the original, up to over 100 minutes. This issue is shown to run for 98 minutes but there are extras in the form of deleted scenes and an alternative title sequence so it is possible that in total it is complete. Several extracts available on YouTube are very impressive, both in respect of sound and vision, and show a very considerable improvement over the fuzzy definition and washed out colour often seen. The colour is of course limited by the two strip system of the time, lacking blues, which in itself adds a feeling for the era.
As yet, only A/1 region versions have been announced.
(In similair vien, I have as yet been unable to track down the Blu-rays of "Road to Rio" and "Road to Bali", covered in BING No.177, in anything other than A/1 versions).
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